

NZHOUSE & GARDEN

AUGUST
2015

INSPIRING HOME LIFE

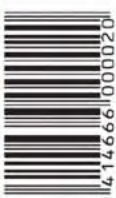
Transformed!

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AT PLAY ON THE PAMPAS

House rules at Casa Marron in Uruguay: everyone's free to do as they please, says the wife of its Kiwi-born owner

PHOTOGRAPH BY SUE ALLISON



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(Source: Nielsen CMI Q4 2013-Q3 2014)



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to block out
the neighbours



I want
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ABOVE Sally Duggan. **BELOW** Chris and Janet Gardner's renovation of their Cambridge villa sparked plenty of neighbourly interaction – initially not all of it positive! Their mammoth renovation also taught them valuable lessons, which they share in our renovations feature, starting on page 147.



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From the editor

PLANNING A MAJOR renovation? Get ready to meet your neighbours. As stories in this issue remind us, doing a large-scale home makeover is never a private project. Start pulling down walls or landscaping your front yard and you are exposed – literally and figuratively – to the community. You become, in effect, a street sideshow, a magnet for neighbourly interaction. Suddenly, people start telling you what they think about your home improvement plans.

Often, I'm told, this is a wonderful experience – as it was for my friends Pete and Yvette, who have hacked and barrowed for years in the front yard of their little brick house in Sandringham, Auckland, to build a basement, a new brick wall and a whole new network of neighbourhood friends.

"We're a regular weekend show," says Yvette. "Men ogle Pete's latest new equipment [among other things, he's got a small digger]; fathers bring their children along to watch. But mostly it's just people passing by, who stop and chat and want to know what you're up to."

For Pete and Yvette the regular weekend conversations cemented friendships and sparked neighbourhood working bees and pizza dinners. When Pete got his jackhammer out, it also inspired one unidentified neighbour to call the noise control officers. But that was nothing compared to the full-scale telling-off endured by another couple of renovators, Chris and Janet Gardner, whose story about transforming a grand 1910 villa is in this issue (page 148).

The Gardners' home was jacked up and ready to move to a new position on its Cambridge site when one of the town's residents roared up in her Morris Minor and gave Chris a dressing down for obliterating a piece of the town's history (she mistakenly thought they were removing the villa altogether).

"Every community has people who want to help, and people who just complain," says Yvette. "When you renovate, you get to interact with a true sample of them all."

Mostly, she reckons, people are not critical or concerned about neighbourhood property values – they're just nosy. "It's natural curiosity. They see an interesting house and think, 'Oooh... I'd like to see what they're doing there.'"

And, of course, here at *NZ House & Garden* we utterly understand that. There are nine fabulous renovated houses in this issue and we take you inside all of them. Curiosity sated without even walking down the street.

Enjoy.

Sally
SALLY DUGGAN

SALLY WEARS A LONDON TIMES DRESS FROM LITTLE STITCH; PHOTOGRAPH BY JANE USSHER; MAKE-UP BY LEISA WELCH; HAIR BY MICHAEL KENT

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BEHIND THE SCENES



SUE HOFFART

JOURNALIST

Watch out, Taranaki, the *NZ House & Garden* House Tours are coming your way in March next year. Sue Hoffart has been scouring the region to unearth “knock your socks off” homes, from a dramatic coastal beauty in Oakura to a small and stylish city pad. Sue has done the spadework for several house tours, but New Plymouth’s generous spirit made her detective work a breeze. “I had such an amazing response. Everyone totally embraced the idea.” Sue urges out-of-town tourgoers to allow enough time to enjoy the city: “There are great surf beaches, a thriving cafe scene and the amazing Te Rewa Rewa Bridge.” Other 2015 house tour locations: north of Auckland around Matakana, in Wellington and Christchurch. Bookings open in October/November.



BRENT DARBY

PHOTOGRAPHER

UK-based photographer Brent Darby grew up in “beautiful Titirangi” before leaving for London 15 years ago. On a trip back home, he photographed the home of Sonia and Chris Couling (page 56), finding it had a link to the Mahurangi cement works where he roamed, camera at the ready, as a lad. The Coulings’ home is one of only a handful of remaining Warkworth homes that were built with local cement. “When I was a youngster the place was free to roam in and out of, to climb all over and explore. I spent my days at the old works shooting rolls and rolls of black and white film.” These days Brent lives in south London with “beautiful Italian Sarah” and their two “confused Kiwi/Italian/English children, who are quickly developing a south London accent”.



A LITTLE BIT BOHO

The vibrant blue of Sonia and Chris Couling’s Warkworth dining room caught art director Richard Brunton’s eye. But it was the chance to create a “bohemian modern” look that convinced him to shoot the cover there. Sonia arranged her treasured ceramics, including Crown Lynn pieces, on the shelves and layered on the plants (Sonia has a thing for string of pearls plants right now and Richard liked the succulents in the pewter kettle on the table). A kilim rug and inviting fur completed the look, but not before a few ceramic birds were popped in here and there. Can you spot all four?

PHOTOGRAPH: LARNIE NICOLSON

STYLING: RICHARD BRUNTON

CREDITS: Kilim rug from Artisan Flooring, Mongolian fur from French Country, all other items homeowner’s own.

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TALKBACK



Happy memories

Pien Faulkner's George Courts apartment (*Feathering Her Nest*, May) was a great trip down memory lane. It brought back good memories of this store: particularly of a tin chicken in a box that "clucked" furiously and laid chocolate marshmallow eggs into a bed of straw that were collected in a white paper bag. Years later I saw that the chicken was for sale at an auction. In my dreams I would still like to own it.
Fran Coyle, Melbourne

Reproductions or the real thing?

We asked in our July issue: *How do you feel about knock-offs?* The ideal for me is a mix. Everything "real" and it looks like a museum; everything "retro" and you know why we moved on from that; everything "repro" and it looks as if you have bought it all from one shop in one afternoon. The only consideration for me is that each and everything in my home should have meaning and be full of memories.
Jill Crossland, Christchurch



DETAIL OF THE MONTH

It's good to see a homeowner thinking outside the square. In the case of Nicola Koptisch, that meant adding a pair of trenches filled with sheared-off statuary and other "ancient" debris to her Roman-themed Wellington garden (page 110). What better way to playfully evoke the march of time and civilisations than a pitful of refined rubble?

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All black triumph

We recently repapered two blue feature walls that had bugged me since the day we moved in 10 years ago. My partner did a double take when I announced I was dead set on black. After a four-month wait for the paper to arrive from Germany, the first hanging attempt was botched. Another long wait, more rolls of paper and a very professional paperhanger later, we're thrilled with the results. Go all black – in doses, of course. *Siddhartha Naidu, Waikanae*

What cosy winter touches are you adding to your home?

We asked our Facebook followers...

Rae Thelma Patten: Making visitors a priority, feeding them comfort food and basking in the glow of friendship.

Lois Mallitte: Lovely, warm flannelette sheets.

Helen Yap: Throws all over the house. Just grab one to keep warm.

Ann McLaughlin: Family, lots of board games, some home baking.

Paula Dann: Log-burner going, hotties and a hot Milo before bed.

Valerie McLeod: Doesn't sound cosy, but my new dehumidifier has made the world of difference.

Sarah Tapsell: Copper lights around pine cones and nice-smelling candles.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Are you clever with colour?

This issue, we're inspired by the use of colour in our cover home. Email us with your favourite colour combination and tell us how you've used it at home. Or share your thoughts on anything else that's on your mind. Email editor@nzhouseandgarden.co.nz (include your full name and your town or city). Every letter published next issue will win this Scent 5 Diffuser in Pomegranate and Orange from French Country Collections. It will fill your room with the scent of berry and bright citrus notes for up to six months. RRP \$44.90. Available at Un Deux Trois in Auckland, call 0800 503 500 for other stockists, frenchcountry.co.nz.



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SELF PORTRAIT

An Auckland apartment is a potent decorative expression of its owners' tastes and talents

WORDS **EMILY SIMPSON**
PHOTOGRAPHS **JANE USSHER**

THIS PAGE Helen Strevens relaxes on a window seat in the Mt Albert, Auckland apartment she shares with her husband Oliver Harmer; above her is a pencil-drawn self portrait; the lamp base is from Mid Century Design in Parnell and the shade has been made up in her own Reclining Lady fabric.

OPPOSITE In this view, two wall coverings, Memphis and Fireplace – designed by Helen and available through Tektura – are juxtaposed; Helen bought the poster, designed by Boris Bilinsky, in Berlin; *Metropolis* is one of her favourite films for its set design.





THIS PAGE (clockwise from left) The Running Man rug in the entrance was designed, by Helen, to show at the annual 100% Design trade event in London. Helen wears a 1970s maxi dress, treasured for its graphic edge and well-made invincibility. The sunburst mirror came from a hospice shop in Mt Eden.

OPPOSITE Lining the window seat are taffeta cushions from Helen's Roman Graffiti series; the deco light fitting was bought by Oliver, who has a lamp collection at his workplace, The Lab Recording Studio.



As a child Helen Strevens was never dressed quite like the other kids at school. Her mother, an artist, sewed each of her five children's outfits and even a pair of Bata Bullet sneakers wasn't safe. "She would paint polka dots on them," remembers Helen.

The family home, with its piles of books and hand-painted wallpapers, also stood out in the suburbs. "It was very *World of Interiors*," says Helen, sipping a take-out coffee and lounging in a sunny corner of her living room. "Not at all the beachy, sporty, outdoorsy, New Zealand style."

Actually, she could be describing her own place, which she shares with her husband Oliver Harmer. In an area packed with \$2 shops and ethnic eateries, this 1940s art deco apartment – one of two – has a slightly faded, retro appeal from the outside. Enter, however, and it unfolds to reveal generous spaces and a style that doesn't owe its elegance to any design blog, app or renovation reality show. Helen makes a point of ignoring the cheerful interior trends that ricochet around the world. Instead, she draws her inspiration from a potent brew that includes ancient Egypt, classical Greece, old Hollywood and the candy-coloured 1980s Italian design movement known as Memphis. >



*"ARCHITECTURE IN NEW ZEALAND
IN THIS DAY AND AGE IS QUITE
PLAIN AND I DON'T DO PLAIN"*





It takes a steady hand to combine these elements in a smallish home and create a mood that's not at all hectic. But then Helen has been honing her eye since birth. Having grown up surrounded by beautiful interiors, she went on to study architecture and work in that field, although the current trend for glass and steel boxes couldn't hold her. "Architecture in New Zealand in this day and age is quite plain and I don't do plain."

Film set design was more fun and Helen has worked on productions such as *The Lord of the Rings*, *The Hobbit* and *Marco Polo*, each adding to her internal library of visual references.

Her two careers, set design and architecture, came together when the film work led to her being hired to work on Peter

Jackson's Wairarapa house. It's a name that looks great on Helen's CV, especially in her most recent incarnation as designer of HMS Studio, her own brand of homeware, which she travels the world selling into upmarket stores. For Helen, who loves nothing more than draughtsmanship, these wallpapers, cushions and dinner plates are simply her latest canvas.

"I have recurring motifs: faces – specifically eyes – and architectural features such as columns. I love geometric forms – the pyramid, the sphere, the cube. Each new collection builds on these motifs and over time they will start to cross-pollinate."

In Helen's house her own products are everywhere, lining window seats and popping up on walls. >

THESE PAGES (clockwise from left) Helen drew this portrait of her sister Sarah for her 40th birthday: "She owns the original and I own the only print"; the background is a wall of their family home, hand-painted by their mother Katherine. Oliver has taught Helen to play the guitar; to the left of the guitar is one of two 1989 lacquered wood Ollo cabinets, designed by Alessandro Mendini for Alchimia and bought from Webb's by Oliver and Helen, who aimed to get one but came home with two. The mini Japanese screen once belonged to Helen's father and the painting behind it was a 21st birthday present from the Auckland artist Jonathan Brown. Above the sofa hangs The Empress plate from Helen's Iris collection, which celebrates archetypes; above it is an antique print, bought in Sydney, by 18th century Italian artist Piranesi. The coffee table is from Mixt in Kingsland, Auckland.





THIS PAGE The second Ollo cabinet, on the other side of the living room fireplace; the cabinets bring a bold energy to the room and are also handy for tucking away random household items.

OPPOSITE (clockwise from top left) Helen bought the French silk jungle scene above her bed at a Remuera antiques shop and wrapped it around a canvas. Helen's Backgammon and Warehouse wall coverings in the study. The bathroom is in its original state, which Helen prefers to an inherited renovation. Helen's Bakelite jewellery – the necklace on the left was originally a French bauble for a baby's cradle and is always a hit with children when she wears it. A Chinese horse figure.

"I like to be surrounded by my work. I look at it and think about it while I'm just wandering past and I have ideas."

The launching of this business has coincided with Helen and Oliver setting up their first home. "We bought it in that tiny little moment where the Auckland property market stood still," says Helen. "We were looking for an apartment as close to the centre of the city as humanly possible and then we found this place. It's a busy road but when you come in the front door it feels like an oasis. It was empty, the walls had just been painted white, there were dark polished floorboards, good spaces."

She and Oliver bought both units in the building, renting the second one to a music school with a view to possibly expanding into it as Helen's business grows. And they brought plenty of

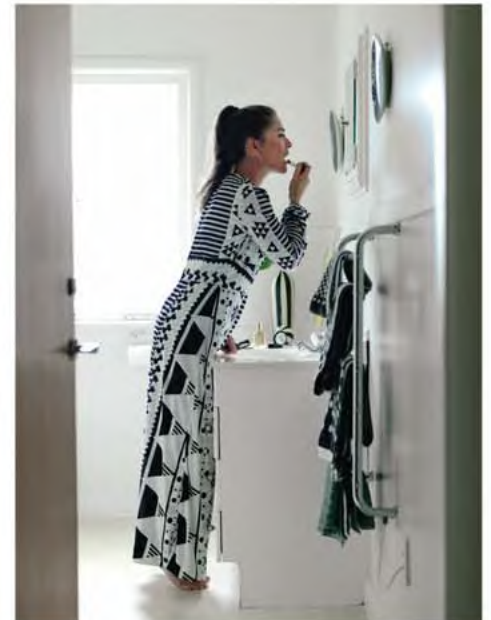
musical instruments to their side of the building. Oliver is a sound engineer working with bands. "He brings the music," says Helen.

He's also a great support to Helen in her determination to create a product she loves, rather than focusing on immediate gain. "He's fantastic because he's artistic as well. Both of our work is about the quality and how much we enjoy making it."

Designing beautiful objects comes naturally to Helen. Getting her head around the prosaic demands of taxes and currency exchange is more of a stretch, although business, too, is in her blood. Her father ran a successful lingerie business that his father had started, selling his wares door to door. "He was an exceedingly charming, good businessman. I still meet old ladies who say, 'Oh, you're Wally Strevens' granddaughter!'" >



*"I LIKE TO BE SURROUNDED BY MY WORK.
I LOOK AT IT AND THINK ABOUT IT WHILE
I'M WANDERING PAST AND I HAVE IDEAS"*



HOMES

THIS PAGE (clockwise from below) A wall covering in the study shows Helen's Iris collection of plates; her Vanitas plate, hanging below the framed line drawing, features a skull and was inspired by the use of symbols to convey the brevity of life in Dutch still life studies. The exterior shape of the art deco apartment building charmed Oliver and Helen at first sight. Helen pins her drawing board with layers of inspiration, then strips it bare at the beginning of each new week.



No doubt it's Wally's spirit that Helen is channelling as she successfully negotiates contracts with stores that have the right "cool but lux" vibe for her label, such as Liberty in London, Becker Minty in Sydney and Smith & Caughey's in Auckland.

As our interview is winding up, there's a knock on the door. It's a courier bearing several huge boxes of dinner plates, fresh from Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire, where they are made. Helen lays them out on her kitchen bench and all the logistical headaches of this project evaporate for a moment as she examines their gilded rims and the evocative drawings she created, originally with pencil and paper.

"By the end of my life I expect there to be many, many more in this collection," she says happily. "Which I'm so excited about. It's like it's got a future and it's a family that's slowly building." ■

Q&A

THIS WEEKEND I WILL BE: Gardening, playing tennis, doing some drawing work and having a dinner party.

BEST TIME OF THE WEEK: Monday morning. Anything seems possible, just like a lovely blank sheet of drawing paper.

FAVOURITE PART OF THE HOUSE: The very corner of the corner sofa. I love to curl up there with a book.

MOST PRECIOUS ITEM IN THE HOUSE: The pair of Alessandro Mendini cabinets that sit on either side of our fireplace. I think of them as "the twins".

NEXT HOUSE PROJECT: A paved courtyard with citrus trees in lovely big pots would be part of the plan.

WITHIN THE NEXT 10 YEARS: I'd like to spend a year living abroad. I dream of Istanbul.

BEST LOCAL COFFEE: The best coffee in Mt Albert is just along the road from us at Cosset. They have excellent baristas, yummy food, great service and a cosy environment.

FAVOURITE WALK: Up Owairaka (Mt Albert). As a child I was very taken with Maurice Gee's *Under the Mountain*. The volcanoes of Auckland feel very special to me. I'm looking forward to the banning of cars from the summits.

Helen Strevens



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THESE PAGES The open-plan living area of Ross and Jacqui Crowe's Kapiti Coast house features a mix of 19th century French crystal and reproduction chandeliers along the length of the room; they're delighted with their new oversized fireplace, which required extra piles to support its weight; a pair of decoy ducks sit on the 3m-long mantel.

A rustic living room with a wooden beam ceiling. A large wooden mantel holds a crystal chandelier, a vase of white flowers, and two ducks. Below the mantel is a fireplace with a dark interior. To the left is a wicker basket of logs. In the foreground, there is a leather ottoman with a patterned pillow and a colorful rug.

THE *yin* AND THE *yang* OF IT

He's practical, she's keen on a *chandelier* or three,
yet somehow they have created a *characterful*
house that reflects them both

WORDS REBECCA LANCASHIRE / PHOTOGRAPHS PAUL MCCREDIE



HE LIKES BATTERED and worn things with a sense of history. He goes for solid construction and practicality. He's at home on the back of a tractor and she is a petite city girl with a serious chandelier collection. Ross and Jacqui Crowe are proof that opposites attract. Not only that, but opposites can also create a harmonious and beautiful home – a special place that reflects them both.

"We meet in the middle," says Jacqui. "Ross is quite rugged, so the house couldn't be too feminine. He's got to be able to put his feet up on the coffee table and the grandchildren [they have eight between them] need to be able to play. We wanted a house we didn't have to be nervous about; somewhere luxurious where you can still come in with your gumboots on."

What they have created at Te Horo, on the Kapiti Coast, over the past five years is exactly that. Their Cape Dutch-style house has the feel of a relaxed yet glamorous country lodge, surrounded by 16ha of farmland and half a hectare of garden. It sits serenely at the end of a maple and pin oak-lined driveway, with the Tararua Ranges as a backdrop. >

THIS PAGE The open-plan living area opens to a west-facing terrace overlooking the rear garden; the 19th century oak refectory dining table and leather chairs came from an estate sale; the sideboard is Tibetan and hand-painted in red, gold and black: "It's all cracked," says Jacqui. "I love that, but Ross, who was a joiner, hates the crooked doors!"

OPPOSITE (from top) Jacqui prepares lunch in her French Country-style kitchen. The kilim-topped coffee table in front of the fire is a perfect spot for putting up your feet at the end of the day, says Jacqui.





"WE WANTED A HOUSE THAT WAS LUXURIOUS, WHERE YOU CAN STILL COME IN WITH YOUR GUMBOOTS ON"



But it wasn't entirely plain sailing. The pair, who married 10 years ago, wanted to escape the wind at their Kapiti Coast beachfront home and went looking in Te Horo, known for its balmy microclimate. Ross didn't even want to buy the house at first. "It was pretty rundown and dark – quite oppressive," says Jacqui. "But I could see the potential. I loved the high ceilings and the little snug – the second sitting room with its fireplace."

There was a pool, but it was overgrown and surrounded by wire netting, and a large garden, dominated by around 200 huge gums, which blocked the light. Jacqui adored the solid plastered walls and rough sarking on the ceilings. Ross couldn't help noticing how crooked the boards were. "You could say I had a romantic view and Ross had a practical view," says Jacqui.

But renovating a house requires different types of skills and Jacqui's flair for design married well with the nuts and bolts experience gained by Ross during a career in commercial and high-end housing construction. They engaged their friend, Wellington architect Roger Walker, to create a seamless extension.

"We wanted the house to look as if it had been here for a long time and to reflect us both," says Jacqui.



DESIGN NOTE

Classic, crisp and graphic, a black and white palette lends itself well to decorative schemes that combine contemporary and traditional features.

Roger's plans extended the living area at the northern end of the house, adding a wing with spare bedrooms, a gym, sauna, home office and pool room. At the other end he created a master suite with a large walk-through wardrobe and bathroom.

Ross brought his construction skills to the project. "In his job, timing is everything, so he was obsessive about things being finished," says Jacqui. "There was a bit of pressure to make decisions – I had only two weeks to design the entire kitchen!"

The living area is a perfect example of their yin and yang style. There's a huge fireplace, nearly 2m high and 3m long – big enough to take serious logs and for 6ft-something Ross to lean against. >

THIS PAGE (clockwise from top left) The master en suite features black and white tiles, drifts of sheer curtains and yet another pretty chandelier. A new clawfoot bath completes the romantic look. The dressing table is late 19th century mahogany, paired with an old piano stool.

OPPOSITE (from top) The master bedroom suite opens to the rear terrace and garden; the chandelier is new, bought at Kirkcaldies in Wellington. A specially angled back allows this 19th century chair to fit neatly into a corner.





THIS PAGE The entranceway features one of Jacqui's favourite pieces: a hall table that unfolds to become a leather-topped card table; the alcove used to store firewood was part of the original Cape Dutch design; Jacqui and Ross installed the shelves above it, which house treasures picked up on their travels.

OPPOSITE (clockwise from top) The pool area was once surrounded by grass and a wire netting fence, but the Crowes added paving and had new walls constructed, with planting that includes magnolias, buxus and Mexican orange blossom hedging with standard Portuguese laurels; the arched wall mirror is from Blue Moon in Hawke's Bay, as are many of the chandeliers in the house. The outdoor fireplace, which warms the terrace outside the kitchen/living area, was designed and built by Ross. Ross and Jacqui Crowe with Bella the Labrador.

They had to put extra piles down to handle the weight of the fireplace but the result was well worth the effort, says Ross. When the jarrah mantel arrived, Jacqui was horrified to see it was highly polished ("like a grand piano") and sent it back to be roughened up. There are squishy couches in aged leather and an antique oak dining table bearing marks and grooves from many a meal: "I like battered furniture – it's quite hard for Ross!"

The coffee table is topped with a kilim, designed to rest your feet on. Look up and a delicate antique glass chandelier hangs from the cathedral ceiling, one of four along the length of the room, plus one in the open-plan, French Country-style kitchen.

"It took me five years to find the right lights; I would rather have a bare bulb and wait."

Her feminine touches are discreet, although romance rules in the dreamy master suite, with a classic black and white checkerboard bathroom floor, a clawfoot bath, drifts of sheer curtains and two of her treasured chandeliers.

The garden, too, has been transformed. Jacqui has created large perennial beds full of cottage flowers, leading towards the old pear orchard. There's one in shades of pinks and purples named the Blackberry Nip, in memory of her late mother's favourite colour and tippie. A woodland area is in development and vege beds and more are planned.

After a long and busy working life as a nurse aide, running a hairdressing salon and more, Jacqui now calls herself a "domestic goddess". But she's clearly not one to put her feet up. >





THESE PAGES (clockwise from above) The Cape Dutch-style house, viewed from the sheltered back garden, looking towards the Tararua Ranges; the formal garden near the house features an albizia tree surrounded by 'Margaret Merrill' roses. The Crowes added the glass-roofed entrance porch, which can be closed off with big double doors; the old Chinese dresser in the entrance came from The Furnishing Affair in Raumati; Portuguese laurel standards surround the entrance and the fountain is from Country Village in Himatangi. Water lilies in the fountain pond. Looking south down the length of the covered porch at the rear of the house; the master suite bedroom window can be seen at the end. >





THIS PAGE (from top)
Hydrangeas beneath a group of flowering cherry trees. Jacqui created this garden in memory of her mother, with red and deep purple roses, gaura and a 'Little Gem' magnolia.



“Every time I come home, there’s another new garden bed,” jokes Ross. But, despite all the changes, the house and garden look settled and comfortable in the landscape, as if they have always been there. As do Ross and Jacqui. “I like being close to the city but I adore living in the country. It is heaven,” says Jacqui.

Meanwhile, Ross is enjoying reliving his farming roots, with Angus cattle and sheep to check on at the end of his working day. “But I don’t name the stock,” says Jacqui. “That would be too hideous!” ■



Q & A

RENOVATION HIGH/LOW POINTS: High point – the completion of the build – privacy and quiet at last. Low point – the winter, with no permanent external wall and so much rain. And there was no privacy at either end of house. (Both)

BEST MONEY SPENT: On the walk-through wardrobe/en suite and bigger bedroom. (Both) Underfloor heating. (Jacqui)

BRAVEST THING WE DID: Extending the family room out into the pool area and building the massive fireplace. Getting the proportions and detail right was a challenge. (Both)

A TIP FOR THE HOME RENOVATOR: Get good subcontractors and finish the job completely. (Ross) Always check that you/your husband/the sparky/the plumber etc are all on the same page. (Jacqui)

THE HOME IMPROVEMENT THAT CAUSED THE MOST DEBATE: The shower – Ross wanted it to be very spacious; it’s 1.8m x 1.2m which I thought a bit over the top, but I can shower four grandchildren in there at once! (Jacqui)

THE ONE THING I WOULD HAVE DONE DIFFERENTLY: Do the build in a quicker time frame. (Ross)

FAVOURITE PART OF THE HOUSE: The outside fire/barbecue living area, any time of day or night with a fire roaring. (Ross) I love being in my kitchen but I also love the new bedroom walk-through wardrobe/en suite bathroom. It’s a sanctuary. (Jacqui)

Jacqui and Ross Crowe



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Chinese four-panel silk **screen** \$3950 and c1950 Italian **chandelier** \$5450, both from European Antiques, europeanantiques.co.nz; **Plate Maps** in Black \$71.30 each and Midas Gold 24-piece **cutlery** set \$474.95, all from Seletti Boutique, selettiboutique.co.nz; wine **glasses** \$11 each from Nest, nest-direct.com; Normann Copenhagen stemless **cognac glasses** \$147 for set of two and **candles** \$13.30 (12-pack), all from Design Denmark, designdenmark.co.nz; (gold vases/candlesticks, from left) wide gold **vase** \$307, small **candlestick** (next to glass) \$135, tall **candlestick** \$244, tall gold **vase** (behind medium vase) \$212 and medium gold **vase** \$202, all from Simon James Design, simonjamesdesign.com.



NZHOUSE
& GARDEN

ANTENNA

Nine pages of news and design trends



NEWS AUGUST

Intriguing snippets from our trend-spotters



TECHNIQUE TO TRY: LAYERED RUGS

Here's a great way to warm up chilly floors this winter: layered rugs. Whether you're laying your rugs side by side (and covering a large floor area) or one on top of the other, it will add plenty of extra visual interest to a room. Try layering a neutral-toned hide over a patterned rug (as above) or covering your floor with several rugs in similar – but not the same! – colours and patterns.



EYEFUL POWER

We're loving this cheeky (or perhaps eye-ronic?) take on Piero Fornasetti's iconic woman – clad in a balaclava. Just right for the winter months. Plate No 160 POA from design55.co.nz.



STRIPE IT RICH

This lovely woollen throw is made from New Zealand lamb's wool, sourced in the South Island, and woven at the Hainsworth Mill in England, which was established more than 200 years ago. Newmarket throw \$180 from exquisiteblankets.co.nz, along with a range of throws, blankets and cosy cushions.



HALO EFFECT

The Mesh Space Pendant, by Flynn Talbot, is one of the newest additions to the lighting collection at Resident, an innovative NZ-based design and manufacturing house. The aluminium mesh fitting is constructed around a "floating halo" of LED light; resident.co.nz.

LAYERED RUG PHOTOGRAPH: JANE USSHER



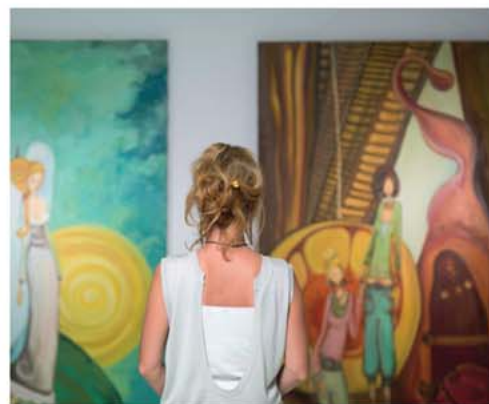
A FEAST FOR THE EYES

Expat Kiwi artist Joel Penkman says he hopes his art “will make people smile”. His still life works depicting lusciously iced cakes, biscuits (including some Kiwi favourites) and wobbling jellies certainly do that – as well as making you peckish. Joel specialises in painting pictures of food using egg tempera; a laborious process, as he makes the gesso to prepare his boards and grinds his own paint to mix. But he reckons “the results are worth it”; see more at joelpenkman.com.



RARE FRUIT

Tea lovers around the world will be coveting this beautiful, limited-edition tea set from Wedgwood – only 100 are being produced worldwide. Wild Strawberry Gold three-piece tea set \$2499, to order from Smith & Caughey's, Kirkcaldie and Stains and Ballantynes.



3 DREAM DATES

K ROAD ART TOUR

Interested in delving a little deeper into Auckland's art scene? Well, this walking tour is for you. Glen Armstrong will take you through the Karangahape Road arts precinct, visiting dealer galleries, exploring current themes, reflecting on some of the issues and meeting some of the people who participate in New Zealand's contemporary art scene.

14 August, 11am-2pm, \$42 per person, Karangahape Rd, Auckland; selwyncomed.school.nz

COMPOSTING WORKSHOP

Hawke's Bay's Environment Centre wants to show you how to keep organic waste out of landfills and instead turn it into nutritious garden fertiliser. The workshop covers both the theory and practical aspects of getting the most out of your compost. You'll help to build a new compost pile and view compost in various stages of decomposition, learn what *not* to do and how to speed up the composting process.

19 & 20 September, 28 November, free admission, Environment Centre Hawke's Bay; environmentcentre.org.nz

RUGBY FOODIE TOUR

Rugby-loving foodies, here's a trip for you: Al Brown is leading an 18-day culinary tour to New York, Paris and London that will see you feasting on authentic nosh while enjoying the company of Al's friends from around the globe, not to mention attending both Rugby World Cup 2015 semi-final games and the grand final. Departing 16 October from Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch, \$28,500 per person; offthebench2015.co.nz or albrown.co.nz



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WHERE THE BUOYS ARE

Pay homage to your hometown with a print such as this tribute to Picton from the Nautical Man Art Print Series by Auckland design studio 326. Lifebuoy print from \$39 from endemicworld.co.nz.



POTTED PATRIMONY

Designer Nina Jaremas drew inspiration from the forests and folklore of her native Ukraine for the Night & Day enamelware collection. Perfect for winter picnics and campfire dinners. Enamel coffee pot \$69.95 from until.com.au.



PRECIOUS THREADS

Mel Chesneau (styledcanvas.com) shares her latest find: I'm smitten by these hand-woven wall hangings by US artist Justine Ashbee. Inspired by time spent in the American south-west and the motifs of indigenous woven craftwork, she uses threads of precious metals, such as brass, silver and gold, mixed with natural fibres. If, like me, you'd like to dress your wall with such exquisite geometric weavings, buy direct from her site, nativeline.com, or check the stockist page for suppliers.



DESIGN DESTINATION: ISTANBUL

Middle Eastern style meets mid-century design at the Soho House Istanbul. The hotel is located inside a 19th century palazzo built by a powerful Genoese merchant, which has undergone an extensive renovation in the past year to restore the building to its former glory; sohohouseistanbul.com. >



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INTERVIEW

MISSFITTINGS

Charlotte Dudley and Anna Clouston came up with the idea for their Marlborough-based furniture store Missfittings over dinner one night. “We were talking about how many of our friends were struggling to find quality furniture at prices they could afford,” says Charlotte. Keen travellers, they decided to try their hands at importing some of the “amazing” furniture seen on their trips overseas... and missfittings.co.nz was born.

WHAT CHALLENGES DID YOU FACE?

Learning about the different elements in setting up a new business. Initially, we set up a store out of town in a beautiful old garage we renovated. Unfortunately, it was difficult to get our customers to drive there. We have now set up a pop-up store in central Blenheim.

HOW DO YOU DECIDE WHAT TO STOCK?

We generally agree on most of the pieces we import but there are definitely some we debate. We tend to make our “pitch” to each other on why we want/need it and go from there. We have a golden rule to stay away from anything we might have seen before. We like every piece to have its point of difference but also to have an element of classical beauty, so it can work in any home. For now, we’re importing from the Philippines, Vietnam, China and the US. We love natural woods, distressed leather and bold colours. (Pictured is the Noah side table in solid reclaimed elm, \$898 from Missfittings.)

*PINING FOR IT*

Now you can buy minimalist, Scandinavian-inspired furniture that’s handmade right here in New Zealand from locally grown pine. Lily Jane Boutique focuses on the “natural beauty of the material”, which means their trestle tables, desks and side tables are completely unembellished. Bespoke pieces also available. Cubby trestle \$499 from lilyjaneboutique.co.nz.

THE LYE OF THE LAND

The Len Lye Centre, the only museum in the country dedicated to the work of a single artist, opens on 25 July in New Plymouth.

The striking new building, designed by Patterson Associates, is the culmination of more than three decades’ work by the city’s Govett-Brewster Art Gallery to create a permanent home for Lye’s work; govettbrewster.com.



GLENN JEFFREY

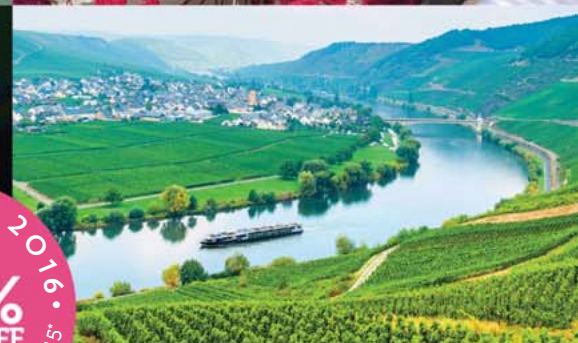
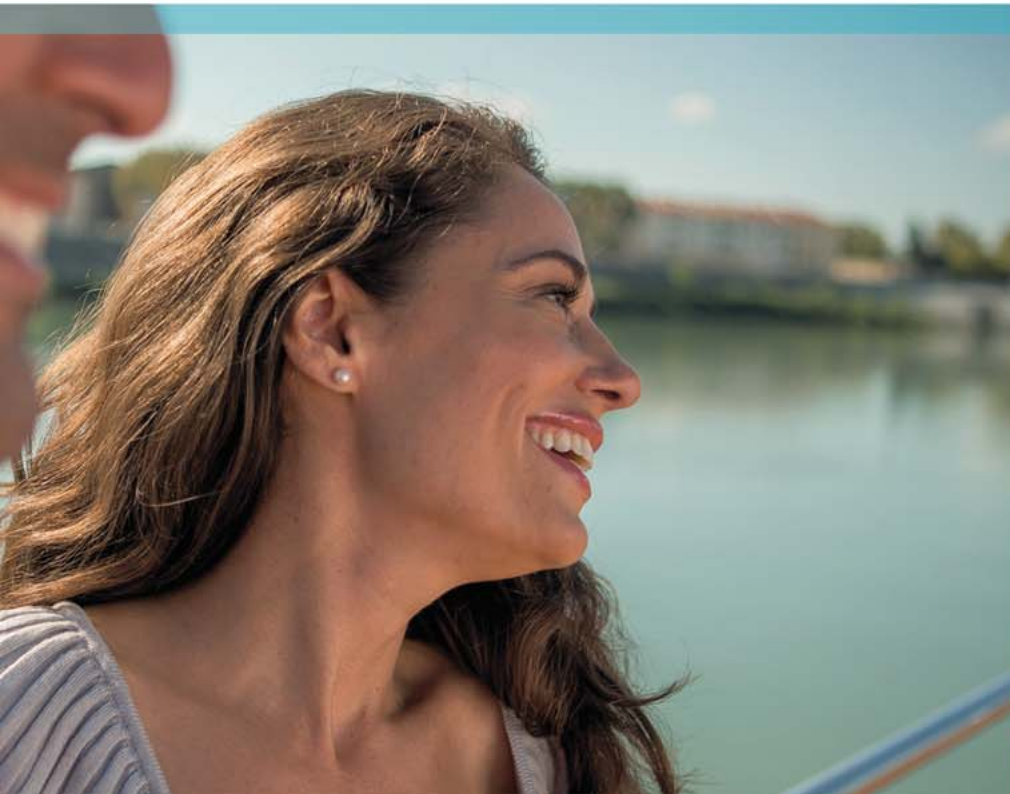
FOOT NOTED

NODI has just released its second collection of handmade rugs. New Zealand designer Olivia Smith says the collection, called Organic Lines, was inspired by the visual lines produced by natural light and “reflects both the balance and the imperfections of nature”, using contrasting textures, shapes and colours. Each rug is handmade in India by a pair of master weavers, so no two rugs are ever quite the same. Organic Lines No 2 from \$395 from yoyo.co.nz. ■



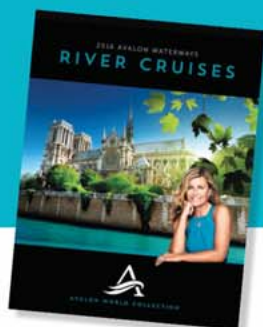
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Tina on **canvas** \$400 from Homage, homage.co.nz; Knoll **coffee table** \$2980 from Studio Italia, studioitalia.co.nz; brass **book end** \$65 each and **books** various prices, all from Everyday Needs, everyday-needs.com; crystal bulb **table lamp** \$695 from Bob and Friends, bobandfriends.co.nz; Papier **tealight** \$18 from Nest, nest-direct.com; glass jellyfish **sculpture** \$75 from BoConcept, boconcept.co.nz; glass ball **vase** 10cm \$16 from Nest; concrete planter pot and orchid stylist's own; Grasshopper **floor lamp** \$475 from Homage; (on floor, from left) brass **tray** \$97.30 from Citta Design, cittadesign.com; Pols Potten **plates** \$75 (four-pack) and **cups** \$60 (four-pack) from Bob and Friends; Ghanaian **basket** \$73.90 from Republic, republichome.com; **basket** with lid \$189 from BoConcept; kilim **cushion** \$75, Mut kilim **rug** \$1905 and Malatya **runner** (front) \$1074, all from Siggada, siggada.co.nz.

BRAVO BOHO

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STYLING **SARAH LODS**
PHOTOGRAPH **BELINDA MERRIE**



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Bunny LED light \$8 from The Warehouse, thewarehouse.co.nz;
all other props stylist's own.

NIGHT NIGHT, SLEEP TIGHT

A gently glowing bunny makes a comforting night-time companion

STYLING **TRACEY STRANGE WATTS**
PHOTOGRAPH **BELINDA MERRIE**



WE CREATED: An eye-catching single-species arrangement.

WHAT'S IN IT: A mass of spring daffodils.

WHY IT WORKS: With its sunny yellow petals, the humble daffodil delivers an instant shot of happiness. An almost iconic emblem of spring, daffodils work best in unfussy arrangements.

WHY WE LIKE IT: Daffodils look best when they are crowded together. The pairing of textured vase and simple blooms, and the fact that the flowers are massed at the lip of the container (rather than conforming to the traditional floristry rule of one-third vase to two-thirds blooms) gives the arrangement a contemporary feel. A coloured ribbon adds an unashamedly decorative touch.

DETAILS Vase \$39.50 from Fairy Flowers, fairyflowers.co.nz; other props stylist's own.

SUNNY BUNCH

An armful of cheery daffodils is welcome proof that spring is just around the corner

STYLING **TRACEY STRANGE WATTS**
PHOTOGRAPH **BELINDA MERRIE**
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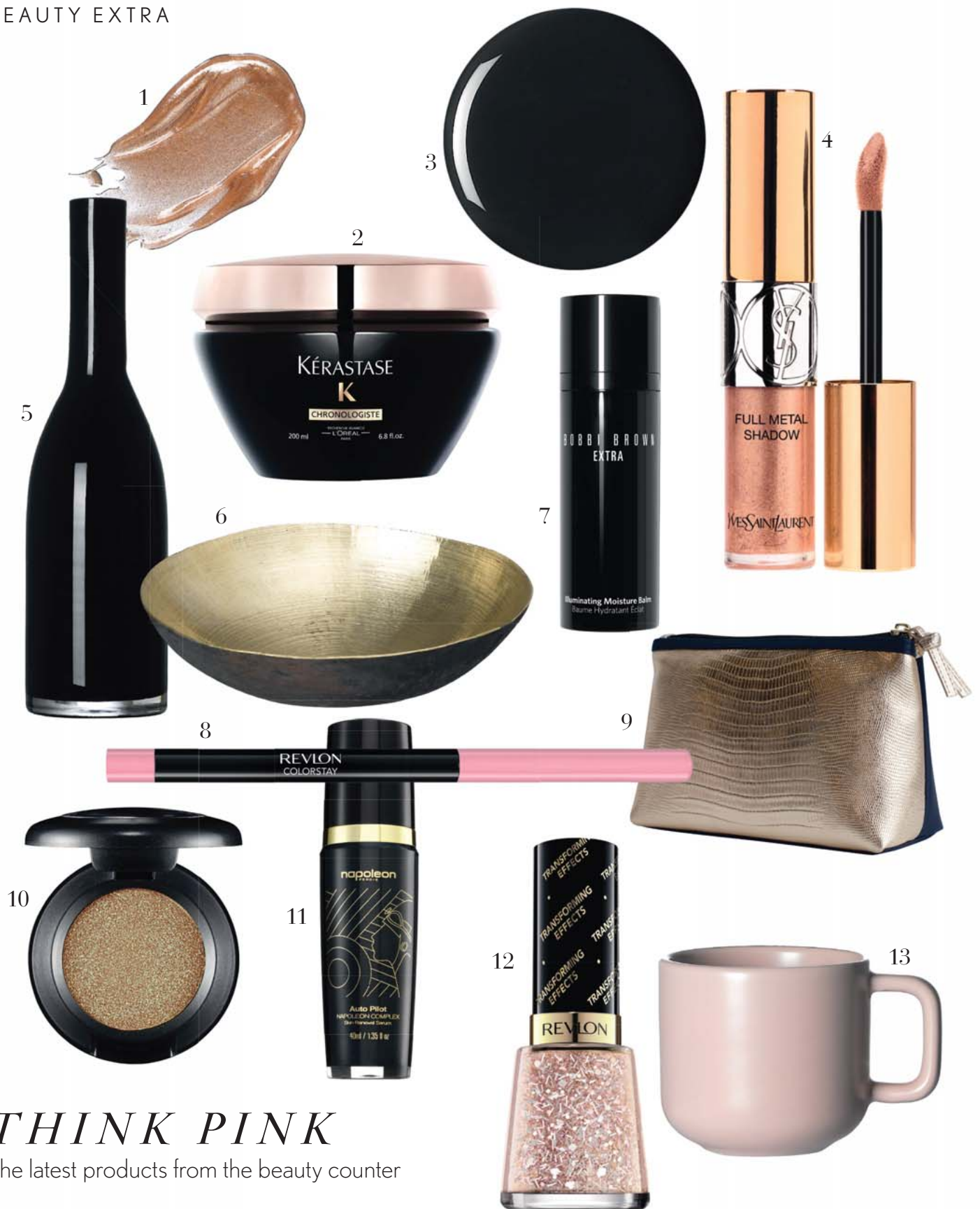
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THINK PINK

The latest products from the beauty counter

WORDS & STYLING **TRACEY STRANGE WATTS**

1 Burt's Bees Lipgloss in Autumn Haze \$20. **2** Kérastase Chronologiste Crème de Régénération \$69. **3** Australis Nail Colour in Goth Rock \$13. **4** YSL Full Metal Shadow in Onde Sable \$55. **5** Black glass vase \$59 from Maddler & Rouge, madderandrouge.co.nz. **6** Small brass dish \$29 from Maddler & Rouge. **7** Bobbi Brown Extra Illuminating Moisture Balm \$115. **8** Revlon ColorStay LipLiner in Soft Pink \$25.50. **9** Tender Love + Carry pouch \$18.95. **10** MAC Dazzleshadow in I Like 2 Watch \$50. **11** Napoleon Complex Skin Renewal Serum \$87. **12** YSL Full Metal Shadow in Onde Sable \$55. **13** Cup \$8.90 from Country Road, countryroad.com.au.



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THESE PAGES Seen through vintage picture frames, Resene 'Bowie' becomes a work of art in Sonia and Chris Couling's north Auckland dining room (also featured on our cover); Sonia used black paint to update the top of the wooden bistro dining table, acquired 20 years ago from Junk & Disorderly in Northcote; the chandelier, a Trade Me find, now sports custom-made shades in Designers Guild fabric with a pompom trim.



STYLED WITH A SMILE

*Fun-loving owners have given this
north Auckland villa a makeover
with a rainbow twist*

WORDS **SIAN LEWIS** / PHOTOGRAPHS **BRENT DARBY**





THIS PAGE Light floods into the master bedroom, highlighting walls in Resene Karen Walker 'Fuscous Grey'; Sonia painted the bedhead, from Junk & Disorderly, and found the vintage metal school sign above the bed on eBay: "I love signs and I'm currently slightly obsessed with ecclesiastic and school ones."

OPPOSITE (clockwise from top left) Red glass in the original front door casts a warm glow along the wide hallway to the Vivienne Westwood Union Jack at the other end. Sonia created the wall panels using door surrounds from a demolition yard, lined with Designers Guild wallpaper that matches the ceiling painted in Dulux 'Azure Sky'. Silhouettes from Etsy hang above a curio cabinet on a statement wall in the master bedroom. An honours board from Flotsam & Jetsam is illuminated by a vintage star floor light; Sonia bought the pheasant and antlers on eBay. Queen Elizabeth II keeps an eye on the the drinks cabinet.



IF THE WALLS OF Sonia and Chris Couling's home could talk they might well tell the story of a small-town cement works whose products became part of the fabric of such national treasures as the Rotorua Bath House and Auckland's Grafton Bridge. The Mahurangi cement works produced Portland cement, which was prized across the country. Yet, in its hometown of Warkworth, it left a legacy of just five concrete houses. And Sonia and Chris live in one of them.

Now, 111 years after it was built, their villa may not be talking but it certainly sings. Bright colours resonate on the walls, and the shelves and antique furniture are alive with Sonia's vast and varied collections, from Crown Lynn ceramics to hymn boards.

The house's original bones remain unchanged, however. "We knew right from the start that there was no way we could alter the house layout," says Sonia. "The walls are concrete – 25cm thick. Luckily, I instantly loved the high ceilings and large scale of the rooms, which all open off the wide central hallway. Every day when I step in through the front door I feel enveloped by the house; its solidity makes me feel safe."

But safe isn't a guiding decorating principle for Sonia. Having worked their magic on a previous home, a renovation project in Auckland's Northcote Point, Sonia and her husband Chris, both Wellingtonians who met in London and married in 2002, were keen to breathe free-wheeling new life into this old house. >



Previous owners of the four-bedroom villa had completed major upgrades, such as the roof. The white picket fence that hugs the edge of the front garden and the kauri floorboards that run through the house were also in great condition. Elsewhere it was a different story. The house had been rented out for years and a muddy mix of clashing colours filled every room.

“The sitting room was definitely the worst,” says Sonia. “The walls were burgundy, with one yellow statement wall. There were purple curtains and a green carpet. The house was a mess and didn’t feel like a home at all.”

Sonia, who works as a buyer and merchandiser for vintage store Junk & Disorderly on Auckland’s North Shore, is a talented magpie whose approach to interior design falls into the maximalist camp. “Oh, more is definitely more,” she says. “My house might be full, but I can always find space for things that make me smile, like vintage signs, or my pair of plastic fishmonger’s lobsters that peek out from the kitchen shelves.”

The kitchen, at the back of the house, has been completely renovated. Taking her inspiration from signs found on Trade Me (“Peter Pan Ice Cream”) and in an Australian vintage store (“Milk Bar”), Sonia decided to paint the original wood panelled ceiling in red and white stripes. >

THIS PAGE (clockwise from top left) Vintage mirrors from eBay in the house’s only bathroom; the upside down plant pot above the bath is from Junk & Disorderly. In the second guest bedroom, a framed 1980s Fido Dido picture (“A gift from my father because he knows how much I love the character”) and a number 7 sit on a bench seat found in a house clearance sale. In the same room, toy soldiers and animals are displayed on a printer’s tray; the light is from eBay. In the main guest bedroom, a mirror from Factory Frames rests on a spindle-legged side table.

OPPOSITE The main guest bedroom is hexagonal, so Sonia has made a feature of its shape by covering the slanting wall with Leopold wallpaper in Schiaparelli from Designers Guild; the fireplace is painted in Resene ‘Smitten’.

DESIGN NOTE

UK interior design guru Abigail Abern is also a fan of Sonia's favourite trick – painting over walls, trims and architectural details in the same hue (as Sonia did in the blue rooms on pages 56 and 57). “Your walls will look and feel incredibly tall,” writes Abigail. See page 161 for a review of her latest book, *Colour*.





THIS PAGE (clockwise from left) The Milk Bar sign above the kitchen mantelpiece gave Sonia the inspiration for the kitchen's red and white colour scheme; the old, hand-painted, wooden Peter Pan ice cream sign, a Trade Me find, used to hang in a dairy. Hexagonal tiling, from Tile Depot, is a modern take on the apothecary look; Sonia uses old metal canisters to store kitchen utensils and vintage cutlery. An old hospital cabinet from Vitrine serves as a storage unit in the kitchen.

OPPOSITE With the best washing up views in town, Sonia's kitchen is a mix of contemporary units and kitsch collectables such as plastic lobsters and garden gnomes.



The black kitchen units we fitted are probably the most modern items in our house," says Sonia. "But they work well with the range cooker and then of course I have Sonia-style kitchen storage." That means a repurposed, glass-fronted hospital cabinet to house cupboard essentials with a vintage shoe polish display unit on top to hold soft drinks and beers.

Installing the range meant removing the old wood stove that had previously sat in the kitchen alcove, but Sonia is not the kind to part with something old when it can be put to good use elsewhere. "It now lives in Chris' brewery, in the outhouse at the back of the garden." In this brewery, which most definitely falls into the "micro" category, Chris spends his weekends working with the alchemy of water, barley, yeast and hops to produce his range of artisan beers. It's a far cry from his 9-to-5 persona as operations manager for a timber company in Silverdale.

This year the couple also tried their hand at making wine from the vines growing on the pergola that shelters their outdoor table. "We spent a whole day picking grapes, but we only cleared half the vine. I had to keep stopping to shake spiders from my hand," says Sonia, with a shudder. "We got 15 bottles out of that haul, so we're definitely in boutique winery territory. But I doubt it's going to make our fortune. In fact, I think it will probably taste disgusting. It was a fun weekend though." >







THIS PAGE (clockwise from left) The Spectators sign, from Old School Inc in Matakana, on the sitting room fireplace once hung at Eden Park; the mantel is lined with a collection of trophies found in junk shops and on eBay. A limited-edition print, *NZ Lamb Chops*, by Annie Smits Sandano, hangs above the sitting room sofa. French doors painted in Resene 'Fuel Yellow' lead from the north-facing verandah into the sitting room; the adjacent French doors to the dining room are painted in 'Bowie' by Resene. **OPPOSITE** 1970s tables from Junk & Disorderly are nestled together in the sitting room where neutral walls, sofas and curtains are accessorised with monochrome Ikea cushions and a velvety black carpet; the standard lamp was made from an old surveyor's tripod.







THIS PAGE (clockwise from left) The house's terrace runs from the east at the front of the house, along the northern side of the house: "It's the perfect spot for a glass of wine as the sun sets. Although, this feels like a colonial house so maybe we should drink more Pimm's"; Sonia found her milk churn planter at The Red Barn Antiques in Matakana. Visiting children always get a kick out of the front yard swing. The original white picket fence and a pineapple palm in front of the Couplings' Victorian villa. **OPPOSITE** "We can easily get 12 on the benches," says Sonia of her vine-canopied Belgian beer hall table; the church sign, from an Australian junk shop, echoes the hue of the door to Chris' home brewery (Meatworks Brew Co), painted in Resene 'Fuel Yellow'.



Q&A

STYLE BUDGET: I'm happy to spend money on things that I love, but most of my favourite things cost very little.

PAINTING TIP: I paint everything, from skirting boards to walls and window frames, in the same colour. Then the room gives you a big colourful hug.

MY NEXT PROJECT: I want to replace the dining room shelves with wooden wall panels, like in old French houses. Of course, then I'll have to find somewhere else for all my treasures.

TO FEEL AS IF I HAVE A NEW HOUSE WITHOUT MOVING: Every month or so, I put on music and move everything around. Sometimes I group my collections by colour, sometimes by maker, such as Crown Lynn. Mostly, I just have fun.

IF I DIDN'T LIVE HERE: I would love to renovate a French chateau. But my inability to speak French might make for a somewhat "interesting" project.

FAVOURITE LOCAL SPOT FOR A LONG LUNCH: The Ransom Winery.

BEST LOCAL INTERIORS SHOPS: There are some fantastic interiors shops tucked away off Matakana Road, between Warkworth and Matakana. My favourites are Old School Inc, The Red Barn and Rummage.

Sonia Couling





"I ALWAYS TRY TO GIVE THINGS A TWIST AND CREATE MY OWN STYLE"

Fun is a constant theme in Sonia and Chris' house. Even areas that at first glance look resolutely grown up have a cheeky side. Take the vintage Chinese drinks cabinet in the dining room. It is stocked with Pimm's and a framed portrait of Queen Elizabeth II reigns over it. So far, so nostalgic... But look a little closer and HRH's name is spelt out below in a Banksy-style set of mismatched vintage Scrabble letters – and there's a small blue gorilla peering out of a pot plant jungle.

"I always try to give things a twist and create my own style," says Sonia. "I'd never want my house to be like anyone else's." ■



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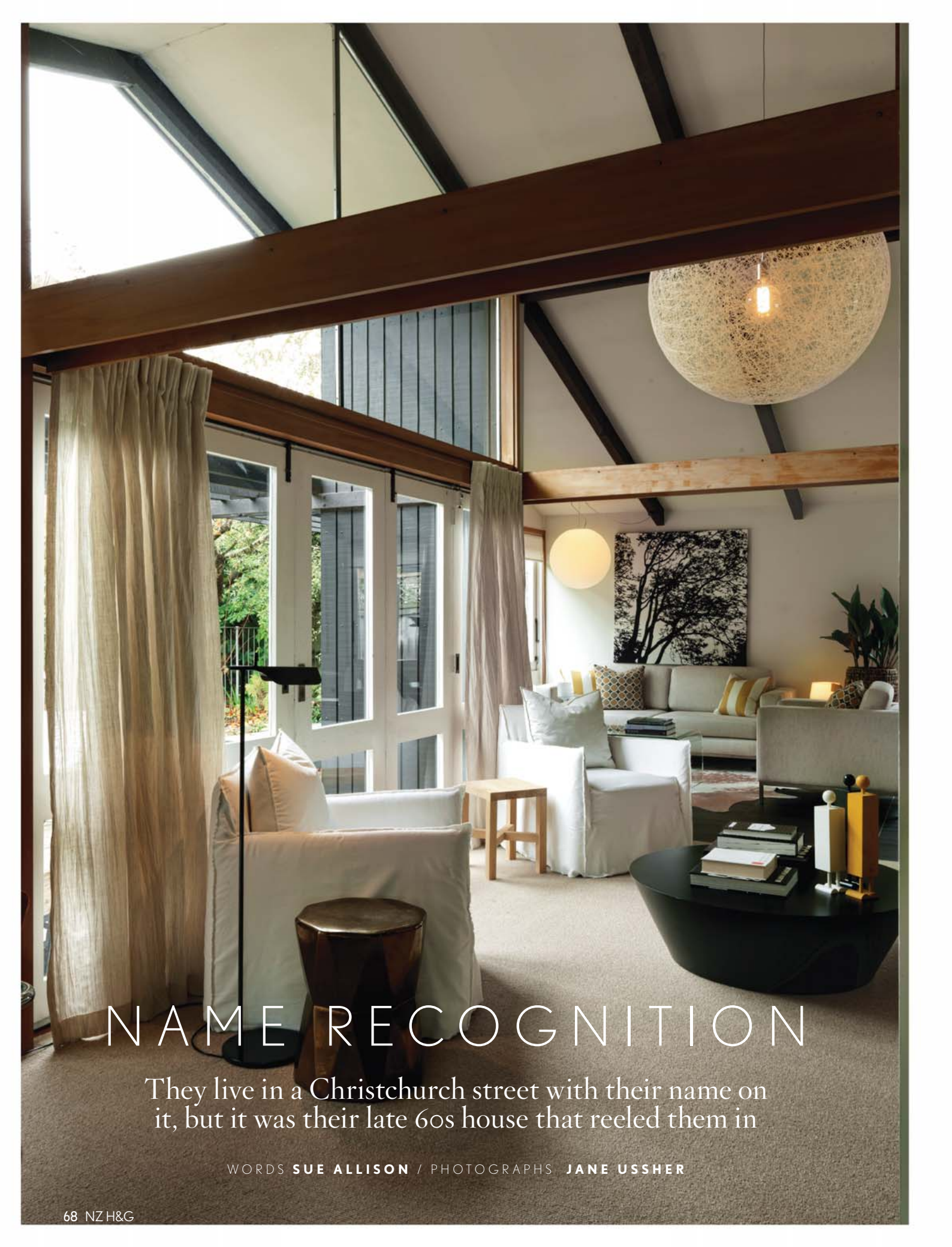
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NAME RECOGNITION

They live in a Christchurch street with their name on it, but it was their late 60s house that reeled them in

WORDS **SUE ALLISON** / PHOTOGRAPHS **JANE USSHER**

THIS PAGE Shoji screens divide the various living and dining areas in Melissa and Jeff Merrin's 1960s house; they reupholstered the Mies van der Rohe Brno dining chairs in burnt orange wool and hung an oversized black drum light shade, designed by Jeff, above the custom-made dining table.

OPPOSITE The Merrins' favourite place to relax after work is in their white Ralph chairs, from Belle Interiors, with a glass of wine under the soft light of the Moooi Random pendant; the Perno coffee table is from Belle Interiors; a black Flos Tab floor lamp and West Elm side table sit beside the closer armchair.





JEFF AND MELISSA Merrin had done up a house in north Christchurch and were about to buy a villa in an inner suburb. “We thought that was the natural progression in Christchurch,” says Jeff. But, the night before the auction, Melissa spotted a 1970s house for sale on the internet. “We fell in love and realised we weren’t villa people after all.”

They missed out on that one, but found another of similar style and vintage in Avonhead. “By the time we got down the drive, we knew we had to have it,” says Jeff. Besides, it had their name on it – literally. “Our friends call us ‘the Merrins of Merrin Street,’” says Melissa.

The house is on a secluded back section with established trees just half a block from a shopping mall. >



THIS PAGE A folding fruit bowl complements the row of backlit Campari bottles in the kitchen, which is in its original state (though the cupboard fronts have been repainted): "Our next project is to update the kitchen but we would like to keep the same footprint," says Melissa.

OPPOSITE (clockwise from top left) The snug, with its low ceiling and built-in 60s sofas (reupholstered in James Dunlop Zig Zag) is a cosy spot off the main lounge; the black and white painting is by Christchurch artist Lonnae Ferrand. Melissa's father gave them this treasured pair of Erik Magnussen Z-Down chairs in pony hide. In the kitchen-dining area, an Artemide Nur Gloss pendant hangs over the Andreu World casual dining table with Catifa chairs. Jeff, Melissa and Isabella Merrin.



THIS PAGE The vista down the hall is framed by a shoji screen sliding wall on one side and solid concrete block on the other.

OPPOSITE The bedhead in the master bedroom is upholstered in Dedar Hop velvet, with Vida linen by Seneca; the cluster of circular mirrors is from Interiors by Lume and the textured grasscloth on the walls from Harlequin. The Merrins repainted the timber panelling in the study white; the reindeer hide on the Eden chair from David Shaw is more often on the floor: "Frank [the dachshund] likes to go hunting and gathering and drags it through the house," says Melissa. The guest bedroom opens onto the lawn. Their "clever metalist friend Bob" made the mirror in the powder room, which reflects photographs of Lake Como.

DESIGN NOTE

Jeff's favourite original feature in this classic late 60s house is the pure geometry of the Japanese-style shoji screens (traditionally a wooden frame with translucent paper inlays), here seen opposite pitted concrete block. "We really like the different wall textures in the house," says Jeff.

"You can't see it or hear it but it's handy when you are out of paprika," says Jeff. It's also a plus for Jeff's teenage daughter, Isabella, who lives with them on alternate weeks.

The 1969 three-bedroom house is unpretentious, with simple lines and a clever collection of spaces. "It feels timeless," says Melissa. "Even though the house is 45 years old, it feels like it could have been built yesterday." They are still trying to find out who the architect was, as records were destroyed in a council fire. "It was someone very clever," says Jeff.

When Jeff and Melissa moved in seven years ago, the interior needed attention. It had chocolate walls with purple, avocado and apricot trimmings. "But we saw that the bones were there and realised we could turn it into something lovely," says Melissa.

They are well qualified to do that. Melissa trained as an interior designer in Brisbane before moving first to Queenstown then Christchurch 15 years ago. Jeff, a Cantabrian, is a lighting designer. Together, they own Lume Design, an architectural lighting and interior design business.

Fortunately they heeded Melissa's own advice to clients – not to rush into making changes until you have lived in a place and seen how it works. "We had some grand ideas about what we would do but soon realised how foolish they were and have done virtually none of them," says Jeff.

They had planned to knock out the walls between the separate shower, toilet and bathroom to make one large room. But, after Melissa's family came to stay, they realised how practical the arrangement was. Their initial reaction was to get rid of the brown beams throughout the house. "Then we realised that would be a travesty," says Jeff. Instead, they repainted them – brown.

They'd just started renovating when the earthquakes struck. "Everything went on hold for another couple of years," says Jeff, with the exception of their wedding. The couple had waited six years to find the perfect venue and Melissa's dream of being married in Italy was realised three weeks after the September 2010 quake, when a dozen friends joined them for their wedding in the beautiful hilltop village of Fiesole, just outside Florence. >





Their love of things Italian is evident throughout the house, from photos of Lake Como to furnishings and light fittings.

Given their business, it's no surprise that the Merrins have a passion for illumination. "Whoever gets home first turns on all the lights and lights the candles," says Melissa. Their homecoming ritual doesn't spike the national grid as the lighting is subdued, with soft uplights, downlights, sidelights and flickering candles.

The Merrins have chosen a largely monochromatic palette – white, black and browns – to complement the simplicity of the house. The sepia tones extend to their pets: Holly, a beige Sydney silky; Frank, a tan miniature dachshund; and Margot, a chocolate Burmese cat. Dim lighting, diminutive colour-coordinated pets: "Yes, we trip over them all the time," says Jeff.

Melissa uses warm reds as highlights among the earth tones. A backlit row of Campari bottles glows on a kitchen shelf. (Full but purely decorative and likely to remain so. "Terrible stuff," says Jeff.) When Melissa's father, an avid collector of classic chairs, gave them a set of 1930s Mies van der Rohe Brno dining chairs, she reupholstered them in burnt orange wool. He also gave them a pair of hide-covered Erik Magnussen Z-Down chairs. "He bought them when I was a baby, so it's lovely having them here to enjoy."

Things with provenance are precious to the Merrins – whether that's family chairs, mementoes of Italy or the Korean



Q&A

BEST DECORATING TIP: Live in a house first and really get to know it before you make any major changes. Our plans changed dramatically once we had spent some time here. (Melissa)

BEST MONEY SPENT: Replacing the carpet. The original carpet had been dyed by the previous owners. We replaced it with a Cavalier Bremworth loop pile – what a transformation! (Both)

BEST SEAT IN THE HOUSE: The "snug", with its built-in 60s sofas. I love curling up there with a magazine, especially when it's raining. The view to the other living areas is one of my favourites. (Melissa)

BEST TIME OF THE WEEK: Friday nights in winter, in our Ralph chairs with a glass of Otago pinot and the fire going. (Both)

BEST ORIGINAL FEATURE: The Shoji screens – stunning. (Jeff)

FAVOURITE LOCAL RESTAURANT: Kinji Japanese restaurant in Greers Road. The food is always amazing. (Both)

FAVOURITE LOCAL SHOP: Interiors by Lume, Normans Road, Strowan. Is that too cheeky? It's my business! (Melissa)

NEXT CHANGE AROUND THE HOUSE: The garden. We are excited to be working with a landscape designer and good friend, Mark Sowerby. We have lots of exciting plans... (Both)

Jeff and Melissa Merrin

altar table at the front door, complete with burn marks from incense sticks. These are the things that give a house its soul.

Melissa and Jeff want to do the right thing by their house. "You never really own a house. You're just its guardian," says Jeff. "We want to do things that add value, not in a financial sense but in a design sense. It's not about being slavish to an era, but about keeping the integrity of the house." ■

THIS PAGE Bifolding doors open onto a concrete-paved seating area at the end of the house; their landscaping plan includes an outdoor kitchen in this area.

OPPOSITE (from left) Sarah Albisser, originally from Switzerland and now living in Wellington, painted the black and white figures above the antique Korean altar table in the entrance hall; the Merrins initially thought they would paint out the dark beams throughout the house, but realised they were integral to the character of the house; at night, they watch the stars – and low-flying planes – through the high end windows. A raised boardwalk leads from a black stone water feature past a native garden to the front door.



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THE ACCIDENTAL RENOVATORS

*A happy tale of how a planned year of travel
and fun morphed into a monster renovation*

WORDS **ANDREA WARMINGTON** / PHOTOGRAPHS **JANE USSHER**

THIS PAGE The deck of Nigel Harrison and Kathy Kane's Herne Bay home is accessible from the office, making it a great place to take a break from work; it is shaded by the clambering bougainvillea 'Scarlet O'Hara' with a water feature that "sings softly" in the background, says the garden's designer Trudy Crerar. **OPPOSITE** Trudy designed the courtyard garden in a floral palette of ethereal blues and purple accented with cerise and a touch of cream and white.





BUYING A DO-UP IN Auckland's Herne Bay wasn't a part of Nigel Harrison and Kathy Kane's plans. The globetrotting couple were based in London when they decided to move to New Zealand. "We were going to rent and travel and just enjoy life," says Kathy.

That idea fell by the wayside when, a mere six weeks after arriving, the couple found themselves unexpectedly drawn to a yellow terraced house in need of a little TLC. "It needed a bit more than that, in truth," says Nigel. "It was certainly in somewhat 'original' condition."

Permanently relocating to Auckland marked a change of pace for the couple, who met in London when Kathy, who's originally from the US, worked for the National Health Service; Nigel, who is English, previously worked for media firm Thomson Reuters. >

THIS PAGE The couple worked with interior designer Gretl Lukas of Lukas Design, who says the compact rooms required close attention to detail, such as custom-designing the circular side tables to be just the right size; the couches were bought in the UK and re-covered in fabrics from Seneca; the lamp is from ECC; Nigel is particularly fond of the old mirror above the fireplace with its black age spots.

OPPOSITE (clockwise from top left) Nigel and Kathy have retained the original door to the house with its distinctive ironwork. Tucked neatly into the living room is Kathy's desk, which belonged to her mother. This corner of the living room features a work (one of two in the room) by the late American artist Anthony Pettera; behind the lamp is an antique cricket bat, which Nigel "funnily enough" lucked upon in an antiques store in North Carolina. Nigel Harrison and Kathy Kane.





THIS PAGE (from top) An Inuit sculpture by Quvianatuliak Takpaungai stands sentry in the living room; it was a gift from Lord Thomson, who commissioned the sculpture for Nigel when he left Thomson Reuters: "It's totally and utterly unique," says Nigel. The dining table and chairs in the kitchen, which doubles as a dining room, are from Sarsfield Brooke. The tiles in the main bathroom are from Tile Space.

OPPOSITE Nigel's vinyl collection is displayed in the snug (also the couple's office), as well as a few of his favourite CDs: "I've got about a thousand CDs in storage"; the brick wall was discovered during the renovation and left uncovered; the nest of tables is from Corso de' Fiori.



"It has been a change but it's been a very, very good change," says Nigel. "We've settled here very easily."

The pair first stumbled upon their house four years ago – "by pure luck" – just as it was due to go to auction. "I have a feeling that, had it gone to auction, we might not have won it," says Nigel. "But we'll never know the answer to that."

The couple hadn't realised that the house was such an iconic part of the neighbourhood. It's the largest of a block of five terraced houses (theirs is three levels rather than two and with a much bigger section) that's been making its presence felt on the leafy street since the 1920s. "When you talk about the row of yellow homes people go, 'Ohhhhh'," says Nigel.

Iconic it might have been, but the house's interior wasn't in a good state. When builders stripped the walls back to the studs, they unearthed a few surprises – an ancient showerhead was found still in place downstairs ("You'd have to have been about four foot tall to use it," says Kathy) and on every level the electrical systems seemed to have undergone some dodgy patch-up jobs.

"So we were quite glad to have had the opportunity to bring it into the 21st century and make it a little safer," says Nigel. >





*BECAUSE OF THE COMPACT
NATURE OF THE HOUSE, THEY
HAD TO MAKE CLEVER USE OF
AVAILABLE SPACE: "IT WAS ALMOST
LIKE DESIGNING A BOAT"*





THIS PAGE The bed was custom-made by Designer's Collection for the couple; the bedding was also custom-made using fabrics from Seneca and James Dunlop.

OPPOSITE (clockwise from top left) The day bed and storage in the corner of the main bedroom were designed by VRLA Architects. The "rope twist" columns flanking the front entrance are original. Featured on the outdoor terrace is a gas fire from Real Fires, a Louvretec loggia, panel heating and even speakers for playing music: "It's a lovely space to have because the house interior is so small," says Kathy; the blue pot was left in the garden by the previous owners.

The couple engaged VRLA Architects to help with the redesign. Because of the compact nature of the house, the firm had to make clever use of the available space, says architect Paul Rosnell: "It was almost like designing a boat." That included designing a parlour-like kitchen that also serves as a dining room and an upstairs dressing room that does double duty as a laundry.

A snug on the ground floor lined with books and records makes a cosy retreat for overnight guests as well as an office for Nigel and Kathy. Their desks sit side by side: "We really like being together, so we're often in the same place, even if we're doing different things," says Kathy.

The snug is a contrast to the airy upper levels, which include Nigel and Kathy's lofty, light-filled bedroom on the top floor, with views of the pink Chelsea Sugar refinery in one direction and the harbour bridge in the other. "It can be quite mesmerising, watching all the lights go backwards and forwards across the bridge at night," says Nigel.

An expansive paved terrace off the second-floor kitchen and living room overlooks a courtyard garden created by landscape designer Trudy Crerar. Kathy was dead set against a lawn, says Trudy. "She wanted a sanctuary – a real garden with flowers and places to sit. She wanted wildlife; a place to feed the birds, bees and butterflies." >





Q&A

VISION FOR THE RENOVATION: What we knew is that we would want to modernise it but still keep its character. (Kathy). We also wanted to frame the space around the fact that there are only two of us and use it to the maximum extent we could. (Nigel)

RENOVATION HIGHLIGHT: Creating what feels like an additional room by putting in new doors and a bridge connecting the kitchen to the terrace. It's a real year-round space. (Both)

BEST PIECE OF ADVICE: Do it right first time, even if it means having to pace the project to match resources as they become available. Skimping will show up in the end and just mean more work to get it right. (Nigel)

RENOVATION LOW POINT: Having to live with the dust and noise of a partially completed renovation, despite the efforts of a wonderful builder to minimise these. Dust in the coffee is not a good start to the day. (Nigel)

BUDGET TIP: Talk to different people and trades before committing to the project and try to put together the most accurate budget possible. And then, when you have done that, add 50 per cent to see if you can still afford the project! (Both)

Kathy Kane & Nigel Harrison

THIS PAGE The exterior of Nigel and Kathy's terraced house, which is one of five in this iconic block.

OPPOSITE (clockwise from top left) *Cupressus sempervirens* 'Totem', underplanted with the gardenia 'Mystery', grow on either side of the spiral staircase, which connects the garden to the terrace above; the rose 'Parnell Heritage' features in the foreground. At the far end of the garden, an intimate patio area has just enough room for two, backdropped by pleached Callery pears and the scent of rosemary and lavender. Nigel and Kathy commissioned the sundial; the ceramic rowboat is a favourite spot for visiting birds to bathe.



Sure enough, there's no mown lawn in the Mediterranean-style courtyard. Instead, it's criss-crossed with stone paths ("There are four different ways to get from the garage to the far corner," notes Nigel), neat hedges and sweet-smelling lavender and herbs. Birds and bees have become frequent visitors, lured by flowers and an enormous urn that serves as a bird feeder.

Although the couple have a gardener who helps with maintenance, Kathy is getting more involved. "I'm out there every day dead-heading and seeing where things are at. It's been great for me. I've never had a garden before so to end up with this as my first garden ever... It's been quite an experience."

Now their work is done, the couple are moving – but not far away. They're downsizing to an apartment in the currently-in-development Hopetoun Residences in nearby Freeman's Bay.

A brand new apartment also has the advantage of giving the couple some much-needed downtime, which means they can finally get on with the travelling they came here to do: an escape to the Bay of Islands, Otago's craggy wine country and the Milford Sound in particular. But one thing's for sure – Auckland is the city these expatriates will keep coming home to.

"You'd have to drag us out of New Zealand kicking and screaming," says Nigel. "We've no plans to go anywhere else." ■

THESE PAGES The home of Geoff and Sarah Cone, with its black-stained timber, stone and glass, blends neatly into the Uruguayan landscape; the expansive deck, flanked by two fireplaces and lit with candle lanterns at night, is built around a gum tree from which hangs a rope swing; for dinner parties, a long table is set up parallel to the pool.





AT PLAY ON THE PAMPAS

House rules at Casa Marron in *Uruguay*: everyone's free to *do as they please*, says the wife of its Kiwi-born owner

WORDS **SUE ALLISON** / PHOTOGRAPHS **JUAN VELANDIA**



THIS PAGE (from top) With six fireplaces on the property and dinner cooked every night over a fire, it takes a lot of wood (shown here stacked on the side deck) to keep the house running. One of two cabins overlooking the fields leading to the lagoon. Sarah and Geoff Cone; Sarah's Epistemology gown, by NZ designers World, was "retired to Uruguay" after she ruined it running through sprinklers in New York's Central Park after a charity gala.

OPPOSITE At night, everyone gathers for a poolside meal cooked on the parrilla (grill), seen at the end of the deck; the slatted verandah roof offers welcome dappled shade by day: "Before we had the pool, we used to sit in the tiny wine storage room to keep cool," says Geoff.



IF IT WEREN'T for the pink flamingoes on the lagoon, it could almost be New Zealand. Green fields, rolling hills, a number eight wire fence and what appears to be some sort of campsite among the pine trees and eucalypts.

But this is Uruguay, a five-minute drive from José Ignacio, an old fishing town that has become one of the chicest spots in South America. The property, Casa Marron, is the Hispanic hang-out of New Zealander Geoff Cone and his American wife Sarah.

"We love it because it is the perfect mix of utterly rustic and impossibly glamorous," says Sarah. "Stunning modernist houses on dirt roads, world-class restaurants combined with roadside vegetable stands, and miles and miles of beaches so beautiful that even Brazilians vacation here."

When they bought the 2.5ha property five years ago, they engaged Martin Gomez, an Argentine architect who has designed more than 500 houses in the area, to add to the existing house and develop the site. They gave him free rein. "Our only idea was that we wanted to build separate cabins instead of one big house, for privacy and to be more interspersed with nature," says Sarah. >





THESE PAGES "On rainy days we build a roaring fire and read in the living room," says Sarah. "My mother had a fit that we had bought white couches, but they are more practical than everyone thinks. They are slip-covered, so we wash them before each summer season and cover any stains with fur throws, which give the room a more glamorous look"; sisal matting has been set into the floorboards. >

*"WE LOVE IT BECAUSE IT IS THE
PERFECT MIX OF UTTERLY RUSTIC
AND IMPOSSIBLY GLAMOROUS"*





THIS PAGE “Unless it is raining, we have our white dining table outside and use the dining room area for dancing,” says Sarah. “We dance almost every night after dinner”; the bookshelves operate as a de facto library, from which literary locals borrow books in English: “We own more than 10,000 books, so there are bookshelves everywhere.”

OPPOSITE The previous owner used to operate a restaurant in the house, so the kitchen is commercial grade; as well as the “show kitchen” in the main room, there’s a working kitchen behind the scenes, where all the “unsexy food preparation” and washing up gets done: “Open kitchens always look perfect in magazines, but in reality you need somewhere to hide the messy parts of cooking,” says Sarah.

As a young graduate, Martin spent five years “taking a long walk around the world”, including several months in “beautiful Aotearoa”, where he biked around both islands and became an aficionado of the Kiwi bach and simple beach house. He admired the way New Zealand architects worked with the landscape and incorporated outdoor spaces in their house designs – verandahs, barbecue areas, wide doors opening onto decks.

It’s a style that transfers well to Uruguay, as does the use of timber. “We love working with wood,” says Martin, whether natural or stained black. “Black is the best colour to go between the trees and the green farmland.”

The Cones’ “camp”, built around the trees, includes two cabins and three permanent tents on raised wooden platforms.

“Sarah bought some excellent canvas tents from Montana that stand up well to the wild storms you get, even in midsummer,” says Geoff. Before that, he had an old Uruguayan army tent. “One day, after lunching well but not wisely, I knocked over a citron candle and woke to find the tent and grass floor on fire.”

This was shortly after a memorable barbecue. “We didn’t realise how dry the grass gets and our first attempt at cooking chops ended in a near conflagration. There was much beating with shirts and running to and from the kitchen with pots of water.”

The most sensible addition, given the heat and Geoff’s incendiary tendencies, was the pool. With its bar and infamous rope swing, the pool is at the heart of the complex, physically and socially. >





“The locals are very hospitable,” says Geoff, who has Uruguayan residency. “If you invite someone they usually bring their friends and family.”

Around 9pm, everyone gathers for an asado or Spanish barbecue. Meat, fish and vegetables are cooked on a huge grill or parrilla, which is hoisted on a chain over embers.

“The parties are wild and legendary – and invariably end up in the pool,” says Sarah. “One morning, I woke to find the deck furniture, a door and the previously arranged flowers in the pool. ‘What happened last night?’ I asked at breakfast. ‘We were playing *Titanic*,’ our friends said.”

They go to Casa Marron to be completely free, says Sarah. Geoff’s legal work entails a peripatetic lifestyle (“I have no idea where he lives”) while she is an investor based in New York. “Here, everyone is supposed to do exactly as they wish at all times. We have developed rather eccentric habits. Whenever I’ve completely trashed a ball gown, I ‘retire it to Uruguay’, so I wear old ball dresses around.”

Sarah fills her days reading and writing, or bikes to the Yoga Shack in José Ignacio. She also grows edible flowers and seedlings for the vegetable garden in a timber greenhouse picturesquely set in the forest. >

THIS PAGE (clockwise from right) “We built a two-room cabin away from everything else so we could have lots of guests over but still have privacy for the two of us,” says Sarah. The chair in the living area looks out over the lagoon. On display in the cabin’s little kitchen (bottom middle and left) is a Kiwi postage stamp print. The interior is painted glossy white, including the bedroom with its little cast-iron fire.

OPPOSITE (from top) The bedroom furniture in the main house was bought in local used-furniture stores: “My husband wouldn’t let me hire an interior designer, so I had to make do with what was easily rooted up,” says Sarah. The wood/white rustic theme follows through into the en suite bathroom.





THIS PAGE (from top) The permanent tents have simple but comfortable furnishings. Geoff's rocking chair on the front porch is his Uruguay office: "He sits there all morning with his laptop," says Sarah. "When he's finished working and starts playing the banjo, you know it's time for fun!"

OPPOSITE (from top) The greenhouse is Sarah's favourite place on the property: "I check on my seedlings every day and encourage them along." Geoff insisted no trees were cut down in the construction of the "campsite", which is lit up at night.

Geoff messes about on the lagoon in his wooden clinker-built boat or takes friends on road trips in Willy, an old and cranky US Army jeep. ("Once I went round a corner and the back wheel rolled past me.")

The local polo club borders the property. "We've become good friends with the owner, who lets us ride his horses," says Geoff, who grew up on a farm in South Canterbury. "Our favourite ride is down to the beach at sunset."

The lagoon forest and the wetlands abound with wildlife – turtles, foxes, deer, small jaguars and a large rodent called a capybara. Flamingoes fly in for spring and South American ostriches, or rhea, sometimes sprint past the house. "Exotic birds perch on a fence outside our porch," says Sarah. "We've practically become birdwatchers. We don't know any of the names, so we make them up – like the 'Louboutin', a copper bird with red under its wings, or 'Angel Cat', a black bird with a long tail."

There are other eye-catching fauna besides. "Handsome men surround our property," says Sarah. "There are no men on earth more gorgeous than polo players, and gauchos [cowboys] wearing red berets often ride past us on their horses. I wave to them while sunbathing."

At dusk, the frogs begin a blood-curdling cacophony that would disturb the deepest siesta. Squadrons of fireflies light the skies and it's time to party. ■

Q&A

MY DECORATING STYLE IS: Rustic minimalism. (Sarah)

BEST DECORATING TIP: Leave it to professionals. There are more important things to spend time on than having a perfect home. It's all about what goes on inside the home, not how it looks. (Sarah)

BEST THING WE EVER DID: Pulling down the satellite dish so no one could hook up TV. However we had a terrible internet connection so built a huge mast that goes up over the tree. People come from far and wide to use our connection. (Geoff)

BIGGEST RENOVATION REGRET: I wish we had made the pool a bit longer so my lap-swimming was more of a workout. A diving board would be fun too. (Sarah)

WE COULDN'T MANAGE WITHOUT: Our Colombian major domo Juan Velandia, a photographer (he shot this story) and linguist who knows the ways of Latin America and how to make things work. And Lizel Ibarra, a lovely lawyer who practically runs José Ignacio in the summer. (Both)

BEST PLACE TO STAY IN THE AREA: Estancia Vik, which you can see in the distance. It's a traditional Uruguayan ranch with a boutique hotel on it. They grow all their own food and a different artist has designed each room. (Sarah)

Sarah and Geoff Cone



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Answering questions you didn't know to ask

These Delftware tiles, decorated with hand-painted motifs, were made in 1710; Dutch potters in Delft were making blue and white tiles with a tin glaze that mimicked Chinese porcelain as long ago as the 16th century; the range is still produced today.

TEAM INDIGO

Blue and white – a classic combination that's just as crisp and fresh today as it ever was

WORDS **GAIL ABBOTT**
PHOTOGRAPHS **MARK SCOTT**



LEFT This Victorian pine dresser was riddled with woodworm and in dire need of restoration. But, once mended and painted in soft sky blue with a white trim and hung on a landing wall, it was transformed into the perfect display unit for a collection of vintage photograph frames and bottles.

A BLUE AND WHITE colour scheme is versatile – giving an infinite number of effects, from crisply contemporary to delicately faded and muted, from relaxed country to traditionally classic. It's a colour combination that's been popular since ancient times – blue and white have been discovered together on wall and ceiling mosaics in villas excavated in Pompeii that date back to the first century AD. The Romans used the rare blue of the indigo plant, found in India, to dye their furnishing fabrics.

When decorating with blue and white, don't worry about matching the different tones perfectly. Warm hues and cool shades sit together easily without clashing, and plenty of white helps them harmonise. Its popularity through the ages means there's no shortage of inspiration – from fabrics and tiles to the collectables on these pages. And, best of all, however you decide to combine blue and white, it's a look that's easy to get right. ■

RIGHT The combination of cobalt oxide and lead crystal gives a striking deep blue glass. The process was developed in the English port of Bristol, which became one of the most important glass-making centres in Europe from around 1780 onward. Many bottles were used to hold poison, with "Not to be taken" moulded on the side. Crowded together on a kitchen shelf, the blue shows a remarkable depth of colour.





ABOVE Josiah Spode, founder of the English Spode pottery works and a pioneer in his field, perfected a technique for transfer printing onto earthenware using engraved copper plates in 1784; his Blue Italian ware – one of the most collectable ranges in history – has been made continuously ever since. **BELOW** (from left) A blue and white jug from the Portmeirion Botanic Blue collection holds a simple posy of muscari (grape hyacinths). Willow Pattern can be found in many different shades of blue, and even in browns and blacks, but the most common is this beautiful deep cobalt blue, used for the earliest pieces.



*Extracted with permission from
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IT TAKES TWO

A Canterbury garden that's *founded on happy partnerships...* of both plants and people

WORDS **SUE ALLISON** / PHOTOGRAPHS **PAUL MCCREDIE**



THESE PAGES Flowering borders enclose Peter and Juliet Worsp's front lawn; the poplar shelter belt was a godsend while they were establishing the garden, but now needs topping to let in the winter sun; the rose in the foreground is 'LD Braithwaite', interspersed with white Queen Anne's lace (*Anthriscus sylvestris* 'Ravenswing') - beautiful, but a nightmare as it seeds everywhere, says Juliet; the clipped escallonia hedge between two wooden obelisks leads to the less formal outer garden.



PETER AND JULIET WORSWICK know a thing or two about what makes a good partnership, and it can be applied to plants as well as people. It's about picking complementary but compatible companions and playing to one's strengths.

By day, Peter and Juliet run Terra Viva, an award-winning garden centre cum cafe in Christchurch. Out of hours, they can be found tending their own patch in Ohoka, 25km north of the city. At home as well as work, Peter is head gardener. "Peter's got the knowledge and the imagination," says Juliet. "He does the planning and planting. I'm the maintenance queen."

Juliet, meanwhile, is in charge of both kitchens and the vegetable garden. "I'm totally spoilt by being married to an exceptionally good cook," says Peter. "I don't cook, but I'm a good kitchen hand."

"We agree 99 per cent of the time, which is important. And though we both work pretty hard, we're good at stopping." ("He's hopeless at it," says Juliet.)

The Worswicks moved to Canterbury and opened Terra Viva 18 years ago, after selling their garden centre business in Auckland. For 13 years they commuted from a 126-year-old house and garden in Loburn, North Canterbury, "with all the charm and disadvantages that brings," says Juliet.

Five years ago, with their two sons and two daughters grown up and gone, they decided to downsize and build on a 2ha section in Mandeville. Aside from a shelter belt of poplars, it was a bare flat paddock. For Peter, it was a blank canvas – a chance to start a garden from scratch and put his botanical matchmaking skills into practice.

"I'm not a purist," he says. "I like a mix." The lawns are dotted with groves of trees – complementary couplings such as maples with griselinias, thujas clustered within borders of figs, Tasman poplars underplanted with blue agapanthus.

As the garden nears the house, it gains intensity, with clipped hedges, colourful flower beds and an elaborate potager garden. >

THIS PAGE (clockwise from left) Tall lime-green *Euphorbia wulfenii* (left foreground) alongside the purple 'Royal Amethyst' rose is one of Peter's favourite planting combinations. The house opens onto the formal lawn and border garden via a Corradi outdoor room with retracting walls and roof: "We use it summer and winter. The house is quite small so it gives us an extra room for entertaining," says Juliet. Peter and Juliet Worsp with their schnauzer Maud, once an enthusiastic watchdog, "but now all three of us are old and deaf," says Juliet. The movable seat has handles at one end and wheels at the other; Juliet took photos of one at Powis Castle in Wales and had a copy made for Peter's birthday.





“Much as I appreciate foliage gardens, I think a garden without colour has something lacking,” says Peter. He wouldn’t be without roses. “They flower for such a long time and, although you have to look after them, it’s worth the effort.”

As with humans, compatibility is essential. “I never understand why people put lavender under roses. They like completely different conditions.”

At the heart of the garden is a hedged “room” leading from the sheltered front terrace. With deep perennial borders on three sides and an immaculate lawn, it is a venue for many a staff party and family gathering, nine grandchildren included.

Peter has planted the borders in colour blocks from orange through white, purple, blue, pink and yellow – more like an artist’s palette than a finished painting. “I didn’t want it symmetrical and matching or it all gets a bit precious.”

Seeking symmetry in partnerships should be avoided. Peter often finds himself counselling customers distressed because their carefully planted couples are growing apart – asymmetrical albizias, temperamental topiaries, uncooperative conifers...

Rather than weeping over their silver pears, Peter advocates a laissez-faire approach. “Plants will never grow evenly. That’s life. Celebrate it. Let it go.” >



THIS PAGE A pair of red smoke bushes (*Cotinus* 'Grace') flank the side exit through the border garden; *Pittosporum* 'Silver Sheen' clipped to a pyramid and the daylily *Hemerocallis* 'Sunday Gloves' add form and texture to the blue and white section.

OPPOSITE (from top) The hedge needs to grow a metre higher to get the desired walled garden effect, says Peter, who finds white-flowering escallonia the best hedging plant for full straight sides; planting in the orange/apricot section of the border garden includes 'Sunny Honey' rose (back left) and *Heuchera* 'Marmalade'. The award-winning rose 'Hamilton Gardens', with its full salmon blooms, stands out in the pink section.



Q&A

CLIMATE: Dry in summer, frosty in winter. The block was originally an apple orchard but it was too frosty, so the venture was abandoned. (Peter)

HOURS SPENT IN THE GARDEN: About eight hours each per week. (Juliet)

WATERING THE GARDEN: We had to water constantly last summer. We have oscillating sprinklers, trickling hoses and weeper/soaker hoses. In the evenings, Peter jumps up every 10 minutes or so to move hoses. I need timers because I forget to turn them off. (Juliet)

FAVOURITE NEW PLANT: *Berberis* 'Helmond Pillar'. (Peter)

FAVOURITE PLANT COMBINATION: Purple 'Royal Amethyst' rose with purple penstemons and lime green euphorbias. (Peter)

MY BIGGEST GARDENING MISTAKE: Spraying roses and using a capful of weedkiller instead of spray fixative. (Peter)

I'VE LEARNED OVER THE YEARS THAT: Good soil preparation is essential, using compost, organic matter and good-quality fertiliser. (Peter)

Juliet & Peter Worsp

THIS PAGE The planting on the shady side of the house is all green, although the ornamental grape on the house turns claret in autumn; a walkway behind the choisya hedge and pair of clipped *Pittosporum* 'Stephens Island' connects the house with the annex at left.

OPPOSITE (from top) Fennel and broad beans are among the vegetables flourishing in the potager, which is largely Juliet's domain (although Peter, who is very orderly, is enlisted to plant the leeks). A wooden pole person from Victorian Wood Works in Geraldine looks over the fledgling dwarf fruit trees in the mini-orchard; a pair of *Thuja occidentalis* 'Holmstrup' mark the entrance to the formal lawn and border garden.

The large vegetable garden keeps them entirely in produce with the excess going to the cafe. Alongside raised beds, it has greenhouses groaning with cherry tomatoes, pale Japanese aubergines, enormous capsicums and even micro-greens.

The vegetable garden is spray-free and they use netting to deter flying pests. "Last year, I watched the cabbage whites as they approached and they would hover, fold back their wings and dive-bomb through any little hole," says Juliet. "We've now got a super-fine white mesh that looks hideous but does the job."

Birds and bees are welcomed. "We always put borage near our beans so they get fertilised," says Peter. As the trees grow, so does the bird population. "We've got fantails, silvereyes, blackbirds, finches and 65 million sparrows," says Juliet, who sustains them in winter with a (costly, says Peter) brew of dripping, oats, sugar and seeds.

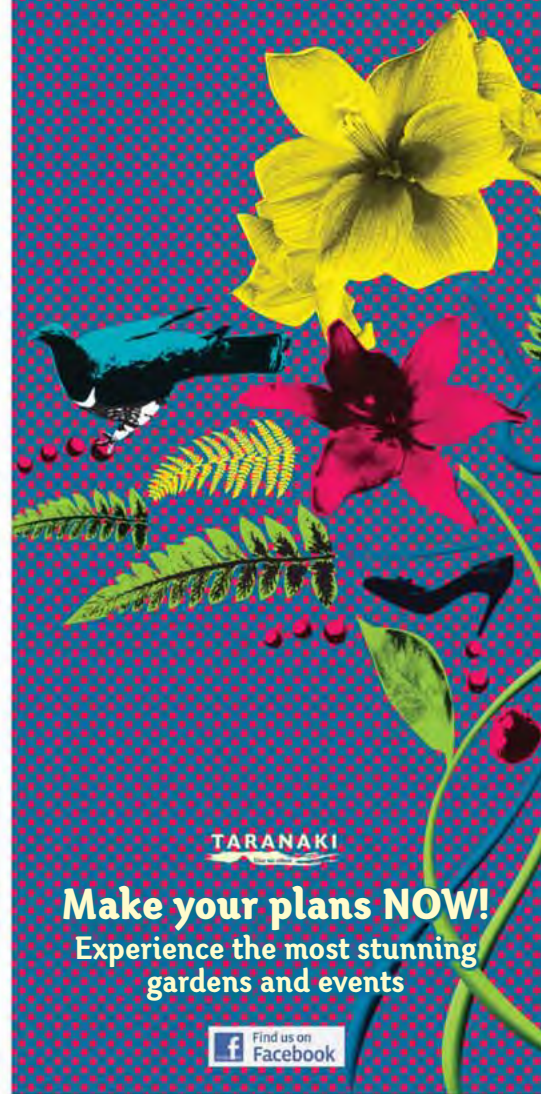
On the side of the house is a self-contained annex with its own garden hedged with columnar crab apples. "We built it as a retreat for carers – people like social workers, pastors or people who look after someone in their family and can't afford to go away," says Juliet. "We felt we had been incredibly blessed in our lives and it was time to give something back."

A shared vision is central to a good partnership and a successful garden. "We understand each other in terms of what needs doing and we have the same ideas," says Peter. Besides, says Juliet, "Two heads are better than one – especially at our age." ■



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LITTLE ITALY

Pour a glass of prosecco and toast the glorious excess of this Roman-themed garden (it's in Wellington)

WORDS REBECCA LANCAHIRE / PHOTOGRAPHS JANE USSHER



THIS PAGE Nicola Koptisch's Wellington courtyard garden celebrates her love of Italian style and borrows its verdant views from the park behind the house; the stone statues were sourced by Country Village in Himatangi and the Roman soldier's head on the column was bought by Nicola in a London antiques shop.

OPPOSITE The gilded chairs are Louis XV-style copies and around 100 years old; Nicola found them in London and replaced their calico covers with New Zealand leather; Nicola's husband Norbert gave her the blue enamel Fabergé-inspired egg as a gift; the gold candlesticks came from Freedom Furniture.





THIS PAGE (clockwise from right) A Roman-style stone lion stands guard on the steps of the portico overlooking the main courtyard; beneath the lion is one of two “Roman trenches” filled with “ancient” rubble. A row of gryphons (there are 10 in all) guards the perimeter of the courtyard. A close-up of the enamel egg. Urns were lopped off the tops of columns and reused to soften the edges of the black planter boxes.

OPPOSITE Nicola Koptisch on the steps leading from the kitchen, where a pair of lead crystal chandeliers from ECC Lighting can be seen through the doorway; the artwork on the outside wall is one of two in the courtyard, printed onto billboard fabric by Mesh in Wellington – this one shows a statue of Caesar near the Roman Forum at night.

WHEN NICOLA KOPTISCH bought her central Wellington villa 20 years ago, the backyard was pragmatic rather than romantic: a lean-to wash house, a concrete path, a patch of scrappy lawn and – centre stage – a wobbly washing line.

But, like the house, which she has transformed from a neglected 1950s dusky pink and floral affair into a glamorous, glittering homage to all things Italian (*NZ House & Garden*, June 2012; see it at nzhouseandgarden.co.nz), the backyard is now unrecognisable.

Instead of skirting the outhouse, we now step out onto an elegant loggia, perched dramatically above the greenery of a park. Wide painted concrete steps (inspired by Rome’s Spanish Steps) lead down to the main courtyard, lined on either side by tall ‘Totem’ cypress trees and ancient-looking statuary. Planter boxes appear to have been hewn from discarded Roman columns.

There are trenches filled with the sort of intriguing rubble usually seen lying around the Roman Forum. Except, in this case, the battered “bronze” pots were discovered at Freedom Furniture and the statuary – columns, busts and other ancient temple bits and bobs – was unearthed in a shop in Himatangi. >



*"I WANTED TO CREATE THE FEELING THAT
YOU ARE TRANSPORTED INTO ANOTHER
WORLD - SOMEWHERE UNIQUE AND THEMED"*



THIS PAGE (clockwise from right) The Roman sign was made specially for the house and records when it was first built and the date the renovation was completed (the couple have since found old newspapers from 1905 tucked into a wall lining, so they now believe the house is older than 1915). Nicola loves the detail of the gryphons. This pair of silver peacocks and two painted wooden pigeons are just a few of the highly detailed objects Nicola has collected; the tray was inherited from Norbert's Austrian family.

OPPOSITE Nicola's passion for creating vignettes plays out on the glass and metal outdoor table, where she has arranged a sequined runner, black grapes, ivy and candles; the urns were a wedding present.



A row of stone gryphons guards the perimeter of the courtyard. Underfoot, artist friend Mike Ting has painted a winged lion, the symbol of the city of Venice. (He also created the trompe l'oeil heavenly skies on the ceilings inside the house.) There are even framed outdoor artworks featuring Roman scenes, printed on billboard fabric to withstand the weather.

Looking back towards the house, a sign in Roman lettering reads: Roman House 1915-2012, reflecting the date when Nicola and husband Norbert initially thought the house was built and the date their renovations were finally completed.

Nicola's vision for Villa Roma, as the house is now called, began to take shape when she first backpacked around northern Italy in her 20s. She fell in love with the villas she visited – grand houses filled with frescoes and antiques or crumbling ruins.

For someone with a house and garden so comprehensively decorated in an Italian style, it seems curious that she has no Italian heritage. But it seems she simply loved the Italian spaces and the atmosphere they evoked.

"I love metal [as well as working as an accountant, Nicola is an accomplished gilder – the house gleams with her gold-leaf work, see more at privatointeriors.com] and I love columns and architectural details – the fireplaces, cornices and high ceilings. The architectural structure of a space is very important to me." She also enjoyed the way Italian gardens were often terraced up a hill, with steps incorporated into the design, creating a grand entrance to the villa at the top. >





Q&A

TYPE OF GARDEN: Inner-city small-space garden that has been made into a terrace so that it's low-maintenance and maximises the entertaining space.

HOURS SPENT PER WEEK IN THE GARDEN: Mainly sweeping all the leaves and rubbish on the front and back of the property: about one hour a week. The trees are very low-maintenance although we get bagworm in the cypress trees, which needs to be cut by hand.

WATERING THE GARDEN: We have an irrigation system set up for the box hedges in the front garden; the cypress trees do not require watering, which is a great time saver.

MOST SIGNIFICANT PLANT IN THE GARDEN: Cypress trees, for the framing of the courtyard, and they are practical as they provide some protection from the wind.

BIGGEST GARDENING MISTAKE: We planted ivy on the front entrance wall. It overtakes everything and started to warp the trellis panels – it was a nightmare to take out.

GETTING RID OF GARDEN WASTE: We use a wheelie bin as we don't have room for a compost heap.

Nicola Koptisch

“With this house and garden, I wanted to create the feeling that you are transported into another world – somewhere unique and themed.” And, sure enough, as soon as the front door is closed on the busy inner-city street outside, visitors step into what seems like an opulent palazzo.

The garden is a seamless extension of her dolce vita vision. Though previous residents may have enjoyed a beer on a sunny afternoon as a reward for digging the vegetable patch, Nicola's pristine Mediterranean courtyard is much more suited to sipping a glass of prosecco in heels than downing a pale ale in muddy gumboots.

When we meet, she produces Tim Tams adorned with edible gold leaf, a whimsical by-product of the advanced gilding course she has just completed in Sydney.

She may have an unwaveringly glamorous vision, but Nicola is more than happy to get her hands dirty for the look she wants. The small front garden was completely dug out to create a more formal look, with buxus, topiary, cobblestones and a loggia-style covered entrance.

THIS PAGE Looking from the house across the courtyard to the green hillside opposite; Victoria University's Gothic Revival-style Hunter Building can be seen to the left – it is lit up at night and adds to the romantic night-time atmosphere in the courtyard; Nicola designed the outdoor lighting, which includes spotlights wired into the concrete flooring and others highlighting the cypress trees.

OPPOSITE Norbert and Nicola Koptisch in their courtyard, with a backdrop of stately cypress trees.

Husband Norbert is on hand to help with heavy lifting and more. "The statues often just look better if they are broken; Norbert has removed a few heads with his mallet when needed!"

The goddess' heads don't go to waste, as Nicola points out, she just pops them in the "Roman" trenches and lets the mossy ground cover soften the edges. Urns that once topped stone columns met a similar fate: lopped off and used to soften the edges of the square planter boxes.

This theatrical atmosphere has been achieved with very few plants. Strong northerly winds that whip up from the motorway (the Terrace Tunnel runs under the park behind the house) and a hot, west-facing aspect make for challenging conditions. Lemon trees and herbs simply gave up the ghost. Hardy cypress thrive, providing some shelter, and her much-loved red roses are nurtured in pots.

"We just had to work to the conditions. I'm not a green-fingered person but it is important to have a relaxing outdoor space, even if it is just a courtyard with topiary pots." And, of course, the odd Roman relic. ■



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TO BEE OR NOT TO BEE

Since *honey bees have disappeared* in the country,
bumblebees are taking up their duties

WORDS **JANICE MARRIOTT & VIRGINIA PAWSEY** / ILLUSTRATION **PIPPA FAY**

DEAR JANICE



Do you remember dicing with death as you ran barefoot over a clover lawn? And the pain – that searing throb as the bee's sting poisoned your foot? Poor bees; it wasn't us who perished but them. The bee's stinger and attached venom sacs are wrenched from its abdomen when it tries to withdraw and its short life is over.

I didn't much care that the bees died back then. I thought they deserved it. Now I mind about bees dying so much I stop the lawnmower and shoo bees from the path of the spinning blades.

Bees are precious. I don't know about city gardens but in the country, unless a beekeeper keeps hives nearby, the honey bees have disappeared. Until the arrival of the deadly varroa mite, wild bees thrived anywhere they could find a cosy niche for a home. We even had a hive in a disused chimney in the house and the summer garden hummed with the sound of buzzing honey bees all day; so did the bedroom alongside the chimney – all night.

Bumblebees have had to assume the role of chief pollinators in gardens now and I've been enticing them to visit by growing wildflowers. I'm not, as you know, a natural wilderness sort of gardener. But, in the spring of my first year here and unable to decide on permanent planting in the driveway garden, I scattered wildflower seeds over the dirt as a space filler. The seeds grew into a waving kaleidoscope of summer colour attracting huge flights of bumblebees. In the autumn the plants seeded and died. When they miraculously resurrected themselves the following spring I thought it inhospitable to pull them out, so let them be.

"Architectural" gardens are predictably well behaved and with judicious management and regular clipping look serenely elegant all year round but, as far as a bee is concerned, they are like a poorly provisioned larder. So, in the interests of bee welfare, I've decided to nurture my wildflowers for another summer.

Virginia

DEAR VIRGINIA



Yes, I am familiar with wild bees. Shortly after I moved here I looked up from gardening and thought I was fainting because I seemed to have black spots in front of my eyes. It turned out they were bees – thousands of them, swarming in my lemon tree. After a while they sorted themselves out and clumped in the tree looking like a huge black sweatshirt.

I phoned a bee person and she rushed round and collected them carefully into a hive. To see them all processing in an orderly queue, no pushing or shoving, up the gangplank into the hive, like fans pouring into Westpac Stadium to see the All Blacks, was extraordinary. The bee catcher persuaded Tane to put his ear to the box and listen to the loud, happy humming. No angry bees here.

But my high stone walls provide perfect nesting places for those furious, foreign wasps who kill all our monarch caterpillars, upset the bees and can make my garden a dangerous place for bare feet.

I've never kept bees but I couldn't do without honey: glazing the Christmas ham, sweetening the honey cake, drenching the baklava or adding it to the hot lemon and whisky drink when I need a pick-me-up. I even like the wooden rod – no idea what you call it – that you twist into the honey pot like a drill and then use to drizzle honey over anything. (I've discovered this is a distraction to keep well away from children at the table.)

I've worked too hard today. I think I'll finish it with a deep, hot bath. I could surround the tub with honeycomb candles that smell of old churches. I might lie back with a home-made honey face pack on and just while away half an hour. Then I could wrap myself in a big towelling robe and eat honey cake before I go to bed. Hmm. Too much fantasy. Maybe I've been reading so many children's books recently I am turning into Winnie the Pooh!

Janice

*I want family time
around the fire...*



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AUGUST FEASTS

GATHERING OF THE CLAN

*A hearty spread for
a family occasion*

MELT MY HEART

Chocolate treats

COURTYARD COOK

*Using herbs you can grow
in the tiniest garden*

SMALL BITES

From our food editor





GATHERING OF THE CLAN

A handsome, hearty spread *that's just right*
for a birthday or other family occasion

RECIPES & FOOD STYLING **BERNADETTE HOGG**
STYLING **CLAUDIA KOZUB**
PHOTOGRAPHS **MANJA WACHSMUTH**

M E N U

WHOLEMEAL & RYE
COB LOAF

OYSTERS WITH
WHITE BALSAMIC &
SHALLOT DRESSING

GREEN OLIVE &
PRESERVED LEMON
TAPENADE

BEST BEEF POT ROAST

BROWN BREAD &
BOURBON ICE CREAM

GOLDEN SYRUP &
GINGERBREAD TART



WHOLEMEAL & RYE COB LOAF

This dense, rustic loaf is great with oysters, cheese and pickles. It's also delicious toasted and spread with cultured butter and honey. It freezes well, too.

1 teaspoon active dry yeast
1 1/3 cups warm water
1/2 teaspoon honey
1 1/2 cups wholemeal flour
1/2 cup rye meal flour
2 cups high-grade or strong bread flour
1 teaspoon salt

Place yeast in a small bowl and mix with half the warm water and all the honey. Leave to stand for about 10 minutes in a warm place until frothy.

Combine flours and salt in a large bowl. Add yeast mixture and enough of the remaining water to mix into a soft dough, adding extra water if necessary.

Knead the dough on a floured surface for about 5 minutes until it feels elastic and springs back when pressed. Place in a lightly oiled bowl and cover with plastic wrap. Leave in a warm place until doubled in size.

Remove dough from bowl and knead for a few minutes on a lightly floured surface. Shape into a round cob and place on a lined baking tray. Make decorative cuts across the top, cover loosely and leave once again to double in size.

Heat oven to 220°C. Bake loaf for 10 minutes then lower heat to 200°C and bake for 20 minutes more. The loaf is

ready when it sounds hollow when tapped on the base. Take from oven and dust with extra rye flour. *Makes 1 round loaf*

Cook's note: To give the loaf a glazed top, take it from the oven 10 minutes before it's done, brush lightly with a little beaten egg and scatter over a little extra rye flour. Return to the oven until cooked.

OYSTERS WITH WHITE BALSAMIC AND SHALLOT DRESSING

Fresh, plump, succulent oysters are best served simply, such as with this piquant dressing. We used Pacific oysters farmed by Andrew and Lisa Hay in the Mahurangi Harbour (order online at mahurangiosters.co.nz). White balsamic vinegar – which is lighter-tasting and less sweet than regular balsamic vinegar – is sold in delis and some supermarkets.

1/2 cup white balsamic vinegar
1/4 cup very finely chopped shallots
Coarse salt or crushed ice for serving
24 oysters, shucked in the half shell
2 lemons, cut into wedges
Fresh dill for garnish
Cracked black pepper to serve

Combine vinegar and shallots in a small bowl. Set aside for 15-30 minutes for flavour to infuse.

Cover a tray or large platter with bed of coarse salt or crushed ice. Arrange oysters decoratively with the lemon wedges and

garnish each one with a sprig of dill. Serve with the dressing and a dish of cracked pepper on the side. *Serves 6-8*

GREEN OLIVE & PRESERVED LEMON TAPENADE

Serve this tasty olive spread as part of a grazing platter with cheese, preserved meats such as salami, pickles and sliced rye bread (see recipe on left).

1 1/2 cups green olives, stones removed
1/4 preserved lemon, flesh discarded, skin rinsed and chopped
3 cloves garlic, peeled and coarsely chopped
1 tablespoon salted capers, rinsed and drained
70g blanched almonds, lightly toasted and coarsely chopped
1 teaspoon cumin seeds, lightly toasted and coarsely ground
1/2 cup chopped fresh herbs (parsley, basil, mint and thyme all work well)
2 tablespoons lemon juice
1/3 cup olive oil

Place all ingredients except oil in a food processor and process to just combine.

With the motor running, gradually add oil in a thin, steady stream. Do not over-process; the final product should have a coarse texture. Season to taste.

Cover loosely and leave to stand for an hour to allow the flavours to infuse. Serve tapenade at room temperature. *Makes about 1 1/2 cups >*



“THE SUNDAY FEAST ACCOMPLISHES MORE THAN JUST FEEDING US. IT NURTURES US” – Chef John Besh

BEST BEEF POT ROAST

The meat and veges are all cooked together for this flavoursome, slow-cooked roast. If you want to flash it up with some extra colour when serving, accompany it with a bowl of chopped parsley that has been combined with the zest of an orange.

2.5kg rolled beef brisket or topside
1 teaspoon flaky sea salt
Freshly ground black pepper
1 tablespoon English mustard
2 teaspoons dark cane sugar (or molasses)
3 tablespoons olive oil, plus extra if needed
1 celeriac, peeled
2 swedes, thickly peeled
4 parsnips, peeled
2 large kumara, peeled
4 carrots, peeled
2 large onions, peeled and each cut into 8 wedges
2 cups beef stock

½ cup red wine
1 tablespoon tomato paste
1 tablespoon molasses (or dark cane sugar)
1 large onion, peeled and studded with 3 whole cloves
10 cloves garlic, peeled
2 bay leaves

Heat oven to 150°C. Pat meat dry using paper towels. Combine the salt, a good grinding of pepper, mustard and sugar. Rub over the beef.

Place oil in a large casserole or high-sided roasting pan with a lid. Place over a high heat, add meat and brown on all sides. Remove meat from casserole and keep warm.

Cut root vegetables into approximately 5cm pieces. Add these, along with onion wedges, to the casserole to brown in

batches, adding extra oil if necessary. Remove from casserole.

Add beef stock, red wine, tomato paste and molasses to casserole, bring to the boil, stirring for several minutes.

Add the onion studded with cloves, garlic cloves and bay leaves. Return beef to casserole, cover and roast for 1 hour.

Turn beef then cook for another hour.

Discard the onion with cloves and add vegetables to casserole, stirring to coat the pieces in the juices. Sit meat on top of the vegetables, cover and cook for a further hour until vegetables and beef are cooked.

Serve from the casserole, drizzled with any cooking juices, or place meat on a warmed serving platter and surround with the vegetables, drizzled with pan juices. *Serves 8-10* >

Selaks promotion

Selaks selects perfect menu matches

Selaks Reserve Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc

Oysters with White Balsamic Dressing

This elegant, well-structured Sauvignon Blanc is brimming with lifted gooseberry and passionfruit aromas. The wine displays ripe tropical fruit flavours that cut through the acidity of the oysters and balsamic dressing. A crisp, refreshing finish.



Selaks Reserve Marlborough Pinot Gris

Green Olive and Preserved Lemon Tapenade

A classic expression of Marlborough Pinot Gris. With delightful aromas of pear, apple and honeysuckle, it will pair perfectly with the tapenade. A rich texture with a crisp, smooth finish.



Selaks Reserve Hawke's Bay Syrah

Best Beef Pot Roast

This elegant wine is a true reflection of Hawke's Bay Syrah with lifted aromas of blackberry and pepper with a hint of spice. A sweet palate of red and dark berry fruits to complement the beef roast. A long, rewarding finish.







BROWN BREAD & BOURBON ICE CREAM

Caramelised breadcrumbs add a delicious nuttiness to this easy, no-churn ice cream.

1 cup soft wholemeal or brown bread crumbs
 ¼ cup dark cane sugar
 300ml cream
 3 tablespoons bourbon
 ⅓ cup icing sugar
 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
 2 egg whites, beaten to stiff peaks

Heat oven to 175°C. Line an oven tray with foil or baking paper. Line a 1 litre freezer-proof container with plastic wrap or baking paper.

Combine breadcrumbs and dark cane sugar. Spread over lined tray and bake, stirring often, for about 10 minutes or until crumbs have coloured. Cool.

Beat the cream to stiff peaks. Add the bourbon, sifted icing sugar, vanilla and

cooled breadcrumbs, mixing gently to combine them.

Fold in beaten egg whites a little at a time until completely combined. Spoon into prepared container.

Freeze for at least 4 hours or until firm. Remove from freezer 10 minutes before serving. *Makes 1 litre*

Cook's note: Save one of the yolks for the gingerbread tart pastry (recipe follows).

GOLDEN SYRUP & GINGERBREAD TART

A gingerbread loaf (either bought or home-made) provides the bulk in the filling of this sweet and spicy tart. Alternatively you could use stale breadcrumbs or brioche crumbs.

Pastry:
 150g flour
 45g ground almonds
 1½ teaspoons icing sugar
 110g cold butter, cut into small pieces

1 teaspoon vanilla extract
 1 egg yolk
 2-3 tablespoons water, chilled
Filling:
 120g gingerbread, crumbled
 1¼ cups golden syrup
 30g butter
 1 lemon, juice and finely grated zest
 1 teaspoon ground ginger
 1 egg, lightly beaten
 100ml cream

Pastry: Place flour, almonds, icing sugar and butter in a food processor and pulse until mixture resembles coarse crumbs.

Add vanilla, egg yolk and chilled water. Process until mixture forms a ball. Take from the bowl, form into a brick shape, cover in plastic wrap and refrigerate for 30 minutes.

Heat oven to 200°C. Lightly grease a 25cm loose-bottom flan tin.

Roll rested pastry to fit the prepared tin (leave about a 1cm overhang to allow for shrinkage) and prick base with a fork. Line with baking paper and baking beans or rice and bake for 15 minutes. Remove paper and beans, trim sides of pastry to height of tin then bake for a further 5 minutes until pastry starts to colour.

Filling: Turn heat to 175°C. Spread crumbled gingerbread on a lined baking tray and place in oven for 5 minutes to dry slightly.

Place golden syrup, butter, lemon juice, zest and ground ginger in a small saucepan. Heat gently, stirring, until the butter has melted. Cool slightly then whisk in egg and cream.

Scatter gingerbread crumbs over tart case and slowly pour over the golden syrup mix. Bake for 30 minutes or until filling is just set. Allow to cool.

Serve the tart at room temperature with small scoops of Brown Bread and Bourbon Ice Cream. *Serves 8-10*

Cook's note: For extra crunch and texture, crumble additional gingerbread and bake until crisp. Scatter this over the cooked tart just before serving. ■



MELT *my heart*

These melt-and-mix *chocolate treats* are ideal for *gifting* or after-dinner *indulging*

RECIPES & STYLING **BERNADETTE HOGG**
PHOTOGRAPHS **MANJA WACHSMUTH**

DOUBLE CHOCOLATE MOUSSE

Having two layers makes this mousse look and taste fabulous. For the dark layer, heat 150ml **cream** and 2 tablespoons brewed espresso **coffee** to simmer point, add 200g chopped dark **chocolate** and 1 tablespoon **brown sugar** and whisk until smooth. Cool several minutes then whisk in 1 **egg yolk** followed by 100g **mascarpone**. Spoon into ½ cup serving glasses and chill until firm. For the white layer, melt 100g **white chocolate** and 70g **mascarpone** in a bowl set over simmering water. Cool slightly then fold in 150ml beaten cream. Spoon over dark mousse and chill until set. *Makes 6*

CHOCOLATE TRUFFLES

Place 500g finely chopped **chocolate** of choice in a bowl. Pour over 200ml **cream** that has been brought almost to the boil, and stir until smooth. Cool then chill until firm. Form into shapes and dust with **cocoa powder**, grated **chocolate**, **coconut**, freeze-dried **berry powder** or finely chopped **nuts**. This recipe has endless variations: infuse flavours such as fresh **rosemary**, **green tea bags**, **orange rind**, **vanilla bean** or **chilli** with the cream (discard flavourings before adding cream to chocolate), or a little **alcohol** can be stirred through before the chocolate is refrigerated. Store truffles in an airtight container in a cool place. Best served at room temperature. *Makes about 40*



HOT MILK STIRRERS

These make a great gift, and are delicious stirred into coffee. Melt dark **chocolate** pieces (or half dark, half milk chocolate), adding a little **alcohol** for an adult version. Pour into mini paper cupcake cases (no larger than $\frac{1}{4}$ cup) and add an ice block stick or disposable wooden spoon to the middle of each. Top with mini **marshmallows**, **cocoa nibs**, **chocolate drops** or **sprinkles**. Once solid, remove from cups. Store in a covered container in a cool place.





CHOCOLATE & SALTED CARAMEL FRUIT & NUT TARTS

This filling makes enough for 16 single-serve 6cm tarts or 24 petit four-style 4cm tarts. Place 1 cup **caster sugar** in a pan with $\frac{1}{2}$ cup water. Bring to the boil, shaking pan to dissolve sugar. Boil until golden caramel in colour. Remove from heat and add 100g good-quality **dark chocolate** pieces, 25g butter, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup **cream** and a good pinch of flaky sea **salt**. Stir in 2 cups chopped **dried fruits** and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup roughly chopped **salted peanuts**. Spoon into pre-baked **pastry cases**. Sprinkle with extra flaky salt before serving.

CHOCOLATE POURING OR DIPPING SAUCE

Serve this gorgeous sauce drizzled over desserts and cakes, or place it in a warmed bowl and use as a dip with marshmallows, fresh fruit, shortbread, pretzels or sponge fingers. Melt 250g good-quality dark **chocolate** pieces and mix in 25g unsalted **butter** and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup **cream**. Add a couple of teaspoons of **liqueur** if you like, and stir until smooth. Cool slightly before serving. *Makes about 1½ cups*



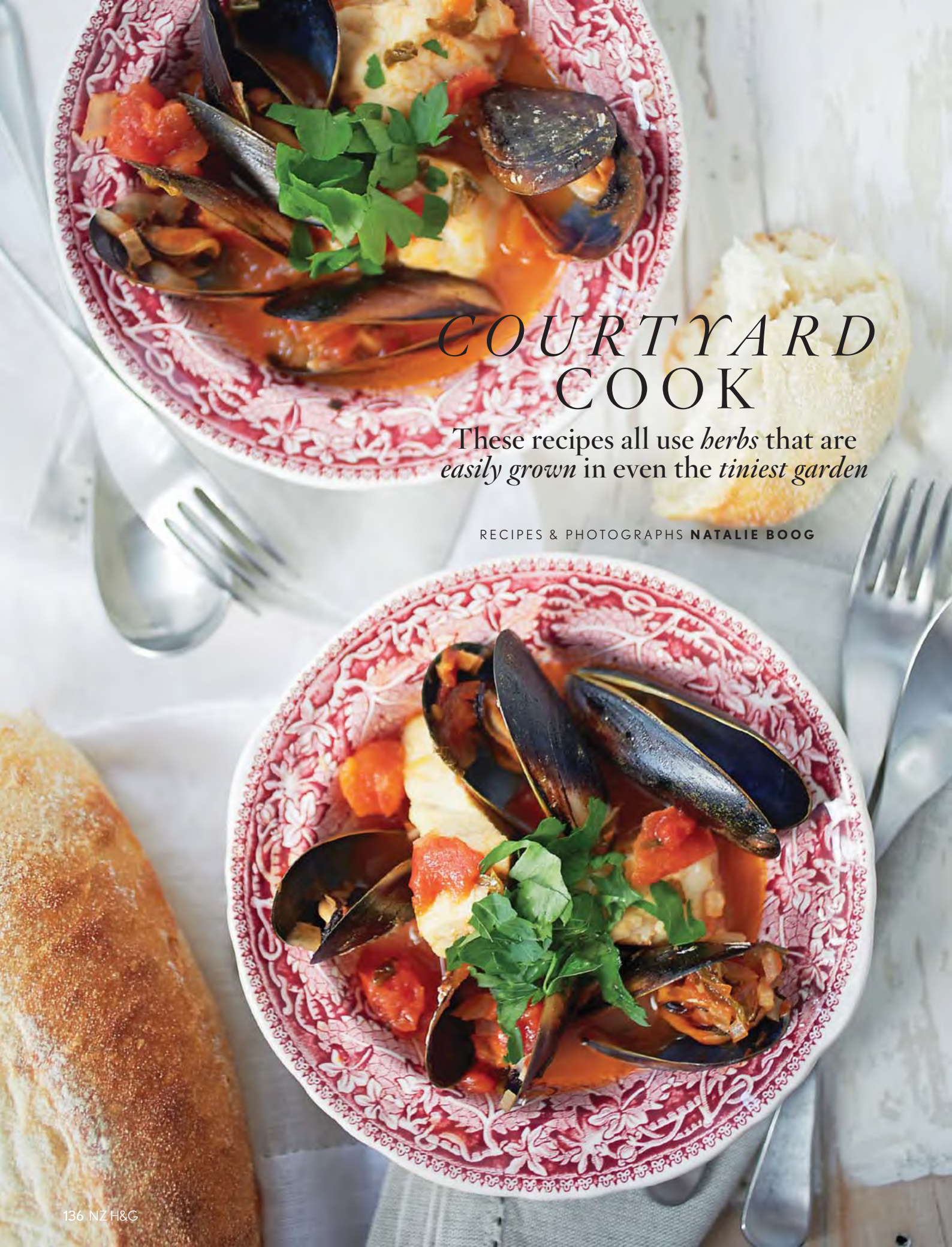
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A top-down view of a dining table. Two bowls filled with mussels, tomatoes, and herbs are the central focus. The bowls have a red and white floral pattern. A piece of bread is on the right, and a long loaf is on the bottom left. Silverware is scattered around the bowls.

COURTYARD COOK

These recipes all use *herbs* that are
easily grown in even the *tiniest garden*

RECIPES & PHOTOGRAPHS **NATALIE BOOG**

THERE'S SO MUCH pleasure in making a delicious dish from something you grow yourself, but not all of us are blessed with green thumbs or quarter-acre plots. For novice gardeners or those with limited space, herbs are the answer – they are generally easy to grow and hardy, and punch well above their size in the flavour stakes. Potted herbs – and many fruits – can thrive in courtyards and on decks, balconies and window sills, ready to add wonderful flavour and freshness to the simplest dishes.

SEAFOOD STEW

This is an ideal meal for friends and family – all the ingredients can be prepared earlier then thrown together to cook when your guests arrive.

2 tablespoons olive oil
1 small onion, finely chopped
2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
1 tablespoon chilli flakes (or less, to taste)
185ml (¾ cup) dry white wine
400g can diced tomatoes
1 handful basil leaves, coarsely chopped
400g firm white fish, cut into large chunks
500g mussels, scrubbed and beards removed
1 handful flat-leaf parsley leaves, coarsely chopped

In a heavy-based saucepan with a lid, heat oil over a medium heat. Add onion, garlic and chilli flakes and cook 5-6 minutes or until onion is soft.

Stir in wine, tomatoes and basil and bring to the boil. Add fish, making sure it's covered with the sauce as much as possible, then add mussels on top. Reduce heat to a simmer, cover pan with lid and cook for a further 8 minutes. Gently shake the pan occasionally but do not take the lid off.

Remove lid, discard any unopened mussels and season to taste with salt and pepper. Scatter over the parsley and serve with crusty bread. *Serves 4*



It's best to harvest parsley as you need it but, if you pick too much, stand the excess stems in a glass of water on the bench – it will last several days.

CELERIAC AND POTATO SOUP

This velvety soup is served with a swirl of bright green parsley oil on top for extra flavour and a dash of colour. When you've got the oven on for something else, you may want to plan ahead and roast the bulb of garlic.

Parsley oil:
1 large handful flat-leaf parsley leaves
50ml olive oil

1 whole garlic bulb
Olive oil
1 leek, pale part only, finely chopped
500g celeriac, peeled and chopped
2 potatoes, coarsely chopped
1 litre (4 cups) vegetable stock

For the parsley oil, process parsley leaves and oil in a food processor until blended. Strain through a fine sieve into a bowl.

Heat oven to 180°C. Slice off and discard 1cm from the top of the garlic bulb. Put garlic, cut side up, on a baking tray, drizzle with olive oil and season with salt and pepper. Roast for 30-40 minutes or until soft.

When cool enough to handle, squeeze out each clove to extract the garlic.

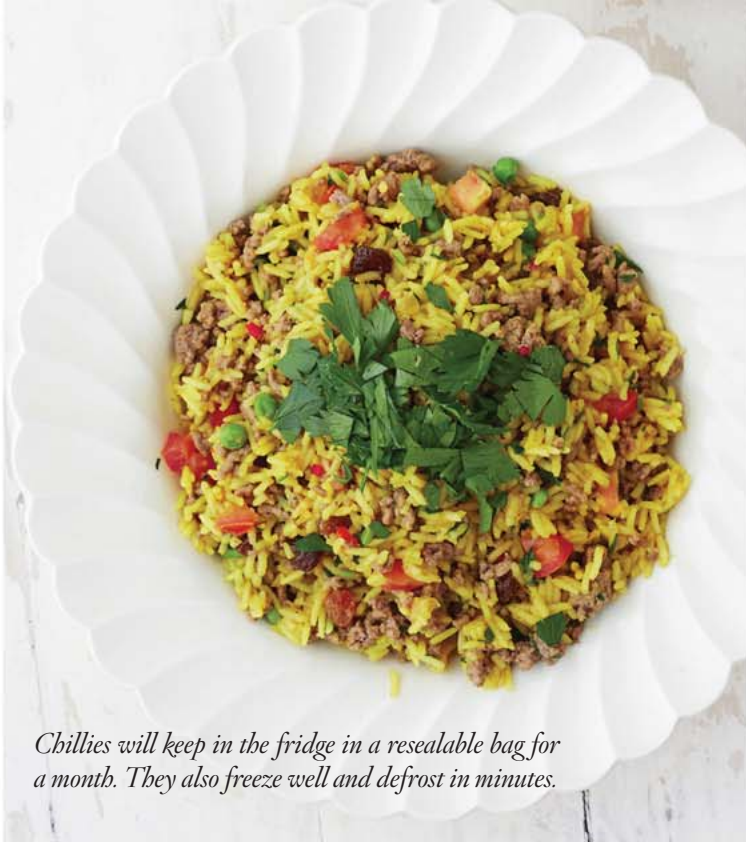
Heat a little oil in a large saucepan, add leek and sauté until softened. Add celeriac and potato and cook, stirring, for about 10 minutes.

Stir in roasted garlic and stock, bring to the boil then reduce heat and simmer about 30-40 minutes, or until vegetables are soft.

Process soup with a stick blender until smooth, adding more stock if soup is too thick. Serve in bowls, drizzled with parsley oil. *Serves 4-6*

EXTRA HELPING

Thyme is almost impossible to kill. The only thing it really dislikes is constant damp, so make sure the pot or garden bed is well drained.



Chillies will keep in the fridge in a resealable bag for a month. They also freeze well and defrost in minutes.

BACON AND EGG BREAD CUPS

This is a delicious and neat way to serve bacon and eggs for breakfast, brunch or Sunday night supper.

2 small vine tomatoes, halved
Olive oil, for drizzling
8 thyme sprigs
4 slices wholemeal sandwich bread, crusts removed
4 short bacon slices, halved lengthways
1 large handful baby spinach leaves
4 eggs

Heat oven to 180°C. Lightly grease a 6-hole large-size (Texas/¾ cup) muffin tin.

Put tomato halves on a baking tray, drizzle with a little oil, season with salt and pepper and scatter with half the thyme sprigs. Roast for 20 minutes or until tender but not falling apart. Set aside. Increase oven temperature to 200°C.

Using a rolling pin, roll bread slices to make them a little thinner then press each slice into greased muffin tin holes. Bake about 10 minutes or just until they begin to brown, then take from oven.

Put 2 strips of bacon in each bread cup in a criss-cross fashion. Add a few spinach

leaves and top with a tomato half.

Crack an egg into each mould, being careful not to break the yolk. Season with salt and pepper, top with remaining thyme sprigs and bake 15 minutes or until cooked to your liking. Serve hot. *Serves 4*

BEEF PILAF

This simple minced beef dish is quick and inexpensive, making it a great weeknight family meal.

1½ tablespoons olive oil
500g beef mince
½ teaspoon ground cumin
½ teaspoon mild paprika
½ teaspoon ground turmeric
1 teaspoon seeded and finely chopped red chilli
1 small onion, finely chopped
300g (1½ cups) basmati rice
750ml (3 cups) vegetable stock
80g (½ cup) frozen peas
2 large tomatoes, diced
50g (¼ cup) sultanas
1 handful flat-leaf parsley leaves, chopped, plus extra to serve

Heat 2 teaspoons of the oil in a heavy-based saucepan over a high heat. Add beef and cook, breaking up any lumps with

the back of a spoon, until browned. Transfer beef to a bowl and set aside.

Heat remaining olive oil in the same pan over a medium heat. Add spices and chilli and cook for 30 seconds or until fragrant. Add onion and stir 5-6 minutes or until soft.

Add rice and stir to coat in the spices then pour in vegetable stock and bring to the boil. Reduce heat to as low as possible, cover with a tight-fitting lid and cook for 15 minutes.

Remove from heat and allow to stand for 15 minutes without removing the lid.

Stir through the beef and all remaining ingredients with a fork. Season to taste and serve with extra parsley scattered on top. *Serves 4* ■



*Extracted from
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Recipes and Growing
Tips for Herbs and Potted
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SMALL BITES

Shopping news and seasonal tips from food editor Sally Butters

Learn about: BREAD FLOUR

Unsure about which white flour to use for bread-making? Until recently, most retailers have offered two types (excluding self-raising): high-grade and standard (also called plain or all-purpose). But bread recipes can call for “strong” or “baker’s” flour.

Basically, it all comes down to protein – protein is what forms gluten and gluten is what gives bread dough its strength and elasticity. All the little holes in bread are where gluten has trapped gas as the dough has risen.

The protein content in flours can be compared by looking at the nutrition information on the packets. Often there isn’t a big difference – maybe a fraction of a per cent – so it pays to read the rest of the information on the packs too. Largely it is protein quality (the ability to form gluten) that counts, not quantity, and flour-makers combine different wheats to come up with blends suited

to different purposes, so check the manufacturer’s recommendations. High-grade flour – which contains more high-quality protein than standard flour (usually around 11.5 per cent) – is a good, basic option for many recipes, including our Wholemeal and Rye Cob Loaf on page 124.



LAURA ADANI/STOCKSY.COM

THREE GOOD SHORT CUT MEALS

- 1 Neudorf Mushrooms’ Wild Mushroom Risotto, \$12 per 270g (serves four), neudorf-mushrooms.co.nz.
- 2 Alexandra’s White Bean & Cranberry Quinoa, \$7 per 220g (serves four), see alexandras.co.nz.
- 3 Absolute Wilderness freeze-dried meals, \$12 each, online orders from absolutewilderness.co.nz.



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THE CAROB KITCHEN BARS are made from carob grown in South Australia. Available in Mint or Almond flavour. Around \$8 per 80g from specialist food stores, thecarobkitchen.com.au.

MATAKANA COCONUT NECTAR, the sweet sap of coconut flowers, is a caramel-tasting alternative to honey or maple syrup. \$19 per 500ml from matakanasuperfoods.com.



SAWTOOTH KITCHEN SYRUPS These intriguing flavours of Lavender, Earl Grey, Gingerbread and Mint can be used for desserts or drinks. \$9 per 300ml at themarketnz.com. Made in Christchurch.

KRISTY'S QUINOA CAKES, rice cakes, corn and mixed grain cakes are Kiwi-made, light, crunchy and gluten-free. \$5.50 per 110g pack from sabato.co.nz.



PACIFIC HARVEST SEA SPAGHETTI (*Himanthalia elongata*) can be eaten as a vegetable or used as a pasta alternative. Just soak or cook until al dente. \$10 per 30g, pacificharvest.co.nz.

URBAN CHEF STICKY CHILLI MAYO is a tasty combination of smooth mayonnaise and sweet, warming chilli jam. \$7 per 225g from supermarkets, kato.co.nz.



Enjoy now: PACIFIC OYSTERS

- Pacific oysters have been farmed in New Zealand since the 1970s and are prized for their unique flavour and plump, succulent meat.

- The growing cycle begins with spat (the juveniles) being collected from areas where it naturally occurs, or grown in commercial hatcheries. Wild spat is collected on timber sticks, which are taken back to the farms and spaced out on inter-tidal racks in sheltered harbours or estuaries; hatchery spat is placed in baskets, mesh trays or bags. They grow to market size in 12-18 months.

- Pacific oysters are at their best for eating from July through to around November. Over summer, when they are in their growth/recovery period, they are less appealing.

- The oysters are sold chilled or frozen in whole, half shell and oyster meat options, but the best way to buy them, if you can, is fresh and alive from the farmers themselves.

- Store live oysters in the fridge, covered with a wet towel. Try your best to keep all of them cupped side down. They should stay happy and alive for several days that way. Do not put them in an airtight container.

- If you want to savour oysters in their natural state without paying a restaurant premium, you will need to shuck them yourself. Look online for how-to videos – it's all about technique rather than muscle.

- New Zealand Pacific oysters are certified as exceeding all US & EU health standards and are classified as safe to be consumed raw.

- The flesh has a wondrous texture and, like any piece of meat, should be chewed. This also releases the full flavour, while the juice (liquor) completes the experience. Don't just slurp and swallow!

- Oysters can be zipped up with lemon juice, vinegar, seasoning or Tabasco sauce (also see our recipe for Oysters with White Balsamic and Shallot Dressing on page 124). If you prefer them cooked, they can be lightly grilled, fried or baked in a little sauce.

- You don't have to like oysters to enjoy the umami oomph of oyster sauce. This Chinese condiment is traditionally made by slowly simmering oysters in water until the juices caramelise into a thick, brown, intensely flavourful sauce.



OYSTERS KILPATRICK

If raw oysters don't appeal, try this tasty classic dish in which the shellfish are grilled.

24 oysters in the half shell
About 4 cups rock salt
2 cloves garlic, finely crushed
Worcestershire sauce
4 rashers streaky bacon, cut into 2cm pieces
2 tablespoons chopped flat-leaf parsley leaves
Lime wedges to serve

Heat grill to medium high. Arrange oysters on a bed of rock salt in an ovenproof serving dish. On each oyster place a little crushed garlic, a couple of shakes of Worcestershire sauce and a piece of bacon. (Oysters can be prepared several hours ahead and kept covered in the fridge until ready to grill.)

Place oysters under hot grill for about 5 minutes or until bacon is crisp. Serve sprinkled with parsley and garnished with wedges of lime. *Makes 2 dozen*

STEAMED GREENS WITH SOY AND OYSTER SAUCE

This sauce will turn any steamed green vegetable into a savoury delight.

Green vegetables of choice (we used 4 small bok choy, 1 bunch choy sum and 1 bunch asparagus, but broccoli and cabbage also work well)
¼ cup oyster sauce
2 tablespoons soy sauce
2 tablespoons sweet chilli sauce
2 teaspoons sesame oil

Steam greens over boiling water until tender and bright green. Combine oyster sauce, soy, sweet chilli and sesame oil. Arrange greens on a warmed serving plate and drizzle with sauce. *Serves 4*



MORE ONLINE | For Peter Gordon's delicious recipes for Oyster, Coconut and Spinach Soup, and Creamy Potato, Leek, Parmesan and Oyster Pie, see nzhouseandgarden.co.nz.

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RENO STORIES

They've been there, done that... seasoned renovators spill the beans about what they've learned

WORDS **ANDREA WARMINGTON & ROSEMARY BARRACLOUGH**

PHOTOGRAPHS **JANE USSHER & BELINDA MERRIE**

STYLING **JUSTINE WILLIAMS**

THIS PAGE Janet and Chris Gardner's award-winning renovation saw the house resited after the back was lopped off; Resene 'Thorndon Cream' was used inside and out in various strengths, the verandahs are Resene 'Shuttle Grey' and the roof is Colorsteel 'Grey Friars'; the garden, designed by Tina McHarg of Cambridge, will only have white flowers.



IF YOU'RE PLANNING a renovation, who better to ask for advice than someone who's been there, done that... and is happy with the result. In this special renovation guide, we talk to a variety of do-up veterans – a semi-retired couple who undertook a painstaking renovation of the heritage home on these pages; a young family who are loving the slick, functional kitchen in their newly renovated home; and a pair of room-by-room renovators with the glitziest laundry we've ever seen. All share what they've learned along the way – ideas for planning, budgets, design ideas and more.



TALK OF THE TOWN

When Chris and Janet Gardner embarked on renovating a tired old villa in a heritage part of Cambridge, they didn't count on becoming a centre of attention in the town. "It was on such a visible site that everybody who walked past had an opinion," says Chris, a semi-retired farmer.

When they'd lopped off the nasty 1960s addition (getting stuck in with crowbar and sledgehammer themselves) and had the grand 1910 home jacked up ready to move to a new position on the same site, one of the town's older residents roared up in her Morris Minor and gave Chris a piece of her mind. "She berated him for removing some of Cambridge's history – she clearly thought we were taking the villa away," says Janet.

To be honest, the idea had crossed their minds. They'd bought the villa in 2007, intending to retire there at some stage, drawn to its 1100sqm site, with a lovely old oak and Japanese maple, near a park and the tennis club where Chris plays. Subdivision and building something new was an option, but they had no clear plan and rented the home out while they pondered.

Fast-forward five years and the Gardners met builder Marcus Grayling at the house. Marcus stomped around on the old floorboards, which proved reassuringly solid, and announced: "You can't bowl this. It's beautiful!"

The couple had been coming around to Marcus' way of thinking anyway. "Homes of the Edwardian era are so gracious," says Janet. The couple had become attached to its lovely sash windows and original fretwork. >

THIS PAGE (clockwise from right) The kitchen splashback from Resene features the clock from the Musée d'Orsay in Paris; the floors throughout are matai milled by St Lukes Timber in Kumeu; all the lights are from Lighting Plus in Hamilton. Chris and Janet Gardner; the shutters were made by Santa Fe in Tauranga and painted in half-strength Resene 'Thorndon Cream' to match the architraves. The living room features one of the home's eight ceiling roses; the originals were made of tin and were in a sad state – they were too expensive to replicate so new ones were made of plaster: "Just as beautiful if not more so," says Janet.



SPECIAL FEATURE *RENOVATIONS*



NUTS & BOLTS

TOTAL COST OF THE RENOVATION: About \$650,000, which includes all the appliances, but not the landscaping or the curtains and shutters (which aren't cheap). (*Chris*)

CONTRACT TERMS: Labour-only contract, but I paid the builder a management fee to coordinate all the subcontractors. (*Chris*)

BUDGET MANAGEMENT: The home came in pretty well on budget. Regulations changed and we needed to put up scaffolding to put the roof on – that cost nearly \$10,000 extra. We also changed to a wider ceiling coving; the plasterer suggested it looked better with the high ceilings and wide skirting boards and he was right. That was another \$5000 or so. (*Chris*)

COLOUR CHOICES: I went for various strengths of Resene 'Thorndon Cream'. It goes so nicely with natural linen and hemp. Traditional Edwardian colours are quite dark and I wanted something subtle. (*Janet*)

THIS HOME IS WARM BECAUSE: It's double glazed and well insulated. We've got gas underfloor heating and a gas fire. I'm never going to cut another piece of firewood! (*Chris*)

WE COULDN'T HAVE BEEN MORE THRILLED WITH: The way everybody worked as a team – the designer, the builder and everybody else who played a part in our project. (*Janet*)

Janet & Chris Gardner



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SANIFLO

THIS PAGE The Gardners' grandchildren sleep in this cosy guest bedroom when they stay over; the leadlight windows are original, but needed modification to fit the new windows, so the coloured glass section was split from the leadlight diamonds – it was rather costly, says Janet, but well worth it when the afternoon light shines through the coloured glass; the bedding is by Fairydown with Maison Voyage cushions from the Bird collection; the walls are all Resene 'Thorndon Cream' – eighth-strength above the picture rail, full-strength below; the picture rail itself is 'Triple Thorndon Cream' for more definition.

They weren't so attached, though, to the scruffy old addition at the back – a new kitchen and living area was needed to replace it. Aaron Guerin of LAD Architecture in Cambridge drew up the plans for the renovation, reconfiguring the spaces in the old house so that they flowed seamlessly into the new areas.

"It was pretty quick. After only two or three meetings he'd virtually come up with what we wanted," says Chris.

Chris, who is 70 in November, and Janet, 67, started the demolition themselves, ripping out the interior, levering up cobblestones and levelling the pergola. Builders came in to cut off the unwanted rooms, which were smashed with a digger and carted to the Gardners' farm, where they were burned in a mighty bonfire.

None of this daunted either of them, says Janet. "Chris is used to dealing with heavy machinery, using contractors, moving buildings... it's all in a day's work for a practical farmer."

Restoring the grand old home and building its new addition took much longer than the demolition, but the Gardners were in no rush. "If you have time pressure, you end up taking short cuts," says Chris. The demolition began in August 2012, Marcus Grayling and his team got under way in October and just over a year later the couple moved in.

It was lucky there was no rush, as there was a lot of authentic detail to perfect. A Cambridge woodturner undertook the massive task of making more than 400 new spindles for the exterior. "When we were nearly finished we found we were 15 short, so the builder had to go and ask him to do some more," says Janet.

The house is finished now, but the couple are still chipping away at the landscaping; it's slow progress, as locals often stop for a chat, telling Janet and Chris how much they enjoyed watching the renovation unfold. "People told us they used to drive past every week to see what had been done."

That first Christmas, an anonymous note appeared in their letterbox: "We have admired your house and garden many times. It's absolutely lovely. Merry Christmas!" >



WINNING IDEAS

His work on the Gardners' home won **Aaron Guerin**, of LAD Architecture, the 2015 Waikato regional Architectural Designers NZ award for best residential alteration and addition. Here are his thoughts on finding an architect/designer and sticking to a budget:

FINDING THE RIGHT ARCHITECT OR DESIGNER: Once you've identified someone you think you'd like to use (via word of mouth, looking at websites etc) meet them to see if you "gel". Ask them about their fee structure, their workload and time frames and discuss what you expect from each other during the design process.

BUDGET MATTERS: First of all, identify what's non-negotiable. Then, if initial quotes are too high, you can work around the less vital aspects. Your architect or designer should identify anything on your wish list that rings alarm bells cost-wise and suggest alternatives that will work within your budget. Price the plans before the building consent stage, so plans can be modified if quotes come back too high. Be very specific about fixtures and fittings, so quotes are accurate.

COMMON CAUSES OF BUDGET BLOW-OUTS: Not having a realistic budget and accurate costings at the start; not having a contingency factored in for unknowns (often when renovating you don't know what you're dealing with before linings are removed); excavation or unexpected issues with the site or excavations (we ask our clients to get an engineer's report early on) and making late changes to your plans.



NUTS & BOLTS

TOTAL KITCHEN COST: Around \$60,000, including appliances, but we got some great deals.

BEST SPLURGE: Extending the stone benchtop into the scullery. I'd considered using a lower-cost benchtop in the scullery, but having the stone all the way through finishes it beautifully.

I'D ADVISE OTHER RENOVATORS: To give designers and architects a really good brief. I wrote about four pages for Jones Architects about the type of family we are, how we entertain – it gave them a really good idea of what we wanted.

I'D THOROUGHLY RECOMMEND: Our cabinetmaker Glenn Hogg from Basement. His advice was invaluable – everything from including extra-large bins to sorting out our bar doors, which needed special hardware to fold back.

IF YOU'RE DESIGNING A KITCHEN: Go to the Blum showroom. You can see all the storage options and there are even kitchen units you can move around to get the spaces between things right.

IT'S A GOOD IDEA TO: Ask builders and tradies what they'd do if it was their place. They live and breathe this stuff and have great ideas.

MY CLEVEREST KITCHEN CUPBOARD: Has room for a broom, mop and stepladder (I'm not very tall).

Pip Simeon

THIS PAGE (from top) Pip loves the fact that her roomy scullery allows her to keep the stone island free of clutter; the Fisher & Paykel French Door fridge is ideal for entertaining as it fits big platters; the lights came from Freedom Furniture and the bar stools were a Trade Me bargain at \$40 for the lot. Pip with Gus, three months, and Max, three.

OPPOSITE (from left) The doors of the built-in bar slide completely away to reveal its mirror-lined shelves; the drinks fridge is directly below the bar. Pip is pleased she splashed out and extended the stone benchtop and tiling into the scullery; she may put some extra shelves in the roomy spaces between the shelves to store cans and smaller items more efficiently.

DOUBLE-DUTY KITCHEN

Pip Simeon's new kitchen is ultra-versatile. In the morning, its roomy, robust scullery is often the scene of muffin-making with son Max, aged three. At night, friends sip wine around the long stone island and built-in, mirror-lined bar.

The functional yet smart new kitchen was installed during a massive renovation of Pip and husband Wayne's 1940s home in Auckland's Westmere, which took it from a poky 80sqm ex-state house to a contemporary 290sqm home that's ideal for a growing family (the couple also have a new baby, Gus).

Pip, a foodie and entertainer, had been mulling over her dream kitchen for years, so she was able to tell kitchen designer Colleen Holder exactly what she wanted – a scullery with stacks of storage where she'd do much of her prep and cleaning up, and a kitchen made for entertaining.

The scullery includes a sink, microwave, drawers, open shelving and permanent spots for appliances, such as a juicer and crockpot. Jones Architects suggested installing a skylight, which makes it a lovely space to work in, "rather than a dingy cupboard," says Pip.





“It surprises me how much I do in the scullery. If I’m baking I’ll do it all in there. All the ingredients are on the shelf around me; everything is at my fingertips.

“If we’re entertaining, the roasting pan can be put in the scullery sink and dealt with later. If I’m busy with the boys and don’t get the groceries completely unpacked I can put away the cold things and just leave the rest of the bags in the scullery.”

Although the scullery meets the needs of Practical Pip, it’s the generous island bench and bar that light up Party Pip. There’s

plenty of space in the mirrored cabinet for her favourite glasses (“If you can’t see them, you don’t use them”) and a beer and wine fridge, so that when she and Wayne are entertaining, the main fridge isn’t cluttered with bottles.

Anything Pip would do differently? “I think I’m going to add another drawer in the scullery for utensils. I’m always rushing out to the kitchen for a measuring spoon or spatula. But that’s about it. I’d put a lot of thought into it, so there’s hardly anything I’d change.” >

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“WHY NOT USE GOLD WALLPAPER IN THE LAUNDRY AND MAKE IT A LUXURIOUS SPACE?”



THIS PAGE (from top) Elaine and Ross Millar’s laundry features custom-made cabinetry, including a shallow-cavity cupboard that conceals the fold-down ironing board; a stainless steel benchtop and Franke sink; the Schumacher wallpaper is metallic gold with a cream seagrass texture. Elaine and Stanley the English bull terrier.

THE LUXURY LAUNDRY

Elaine Millar uses one word to sum up her 60s-era home in Westmere, Auckland, when she and her husband Ross moved in: “Rough,” she says. “It was really rough. It had been a rental property for 10 years and little had been done to it. The laundry was just a rumpty old space with a rumpty old metal sink. No storage, no nothing.”

The couple tossed up between two options: renovating the existing laundry or absorbing it into a cupboard. They decided on the former, transforming the uninspiring space with the help of builder Paris Strewe into one of the most glamorous laundries we’ve come across – Carrara marble on the floor, sleek cabinetry and even gold wallpaper.

“We just thought why not use gold grasspaper in the laundry and make it a luxurious space? It’s one of the first rooms you see as you walk down the hallway in our house and we wanted to make it feel like a real, decorated room.” >

NUTS & BOLTS

TOTAL COST OF THE LAUNDRY: About \$8000. We never set a budget, but we did want to be economical, as well as using materials similar to those we’ve used throughout the house. We could have done it for less, but that was our choice. We did the wallpapering, installed the cupboard mirror and laid the floor tiles and the bench splashback ourselves. Ross also did the finish on the wooden cabinetry, so that all helped with the budget.

BIGGEST CHALLENGE: Trying to maximise the way we used the limited space and make it functional. There was an external door, which we sealed and turned into a shallow cupboard for the ironing board and brooms and we added a skylight to gain light.

BIGGEST SPLURGE: A stainless steel benchtop. It had to be laser-measured, right down to the millimetre, so there was no room for error. It took six weeks to be made by Burns and Ferrall.

INNOVATIVE IDEA: We have two separate pull-out drawers beside our washing machine; one for whites and one for colours.

Elaine Millar



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THIS IS OUR HOME



THIS PAGE The guest bedroom features wallpaper and fabric from Florence Broadhurst; the antique bedhead was bought at auction, the framed artworks are antique Japanese woodblock prints and the George Nelson saucer lightshade is from Homage; Ross recently bought the blanc de Chine porcelain figures and thought they would be perfect sitting on the pelmet.

OPPOSITE PAGE (from top) A Buddha lamp sits atop a Chinese sideboard; the lacquered bowl and faceted mirror were sourced at auction: "It's the room that auction built," says Elaine. The bamboo bedside tables and pierced porcelain lamps were bought at auction.

WALLPAPER WITH DRAMA

There are some occasions, reckons Elaine Millar, when professional help should be sought and the hanging of tissue paper-thin Florence Broadhurst bamboo-patterned gold wallpaper in the chinoiserie-themed guest bedroom is one of them. "I made a big mistake because I bought it untrimmed. That means that you've got to match the selvages together and then trim them off. Plus, when it got wet, the wallpaper would tear... it was such a nightmare. It nearly ended in divorce. I think we started at nine in the morning and we finished at half-past 12 that night. Thank god it looks good because it was just a disaster."

Look good it does; the decor is a "salute to 60s Oriental style" and, in addition to the gilded wallpaper, also features bamboo bedside tables, porcelain lamps with bamboo detailing and, the pièce de résistance, the headboard fashioned from an opium smoking bed, which Elaine's husband Ross, an antiques expert, bought her for a birthday present. "He has such a good eye." >

ARCHITECT OR DESIGNER?

What's the difference between an architect and an architectural designer? Only registered architects are legally entitled to use the term "architect". To become registered, they need a recognised architectural degree, several years of practical experience and must convince the NZ Architects Registration Board (NZRAB) of their competence. Architectural designers may have a degree or some other qualification and, if they meet certain criteria, they can become members of Architectural Designers NZ. You can find registered architects in your area at nznab.nz or architectural designers at adnz.org.nz.

NUTS & BOLTS

VISION FOR THE ROOM: I really admire Florence Broadhurst's designs so when I discovered that she had a range of bamboo-style fabrics and wallpaper, it became clear to me that that was the aesthetic I wanted for the room. I discovered she had a two-tone gold/bronze bamboo patterned wallpaper and, because we'd used gold wallpaper in other rooms of the house, it became obvious that was going to be the background for the room.

TIME FRAME: We did it over weekends, but to do it in one go it would have taken a good couple of weeks. It wasn't a quick cosmetic job. We had to paint the ceiling, paint the window frames, paint the skirting... there are lots of prep jobs before you even get started.

BIGGEST SPLURGE: Florence Broadhurst Japanese Bamboo wallpaper from Signature Prints, signatureprints.com.au.

BEST BUDGET BUY: The "cheap as chips" bamboo tables were bought at auction. They were originally pale blue so I repainted them white.

TOP TIP: We had Michael's Upholstery in Remuera reupholster the headboard and it was unbelievable. He did such a good job; it's just to die for. And it was really affordable.

LESSONS LEARNED: I bought the fabric and wallpaper online and I made a mistake in the quantity of fabric and over-ordered.

Elaine Millar



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GOT A LICENCE?

You must have a licensed building practitioner to carry out or supervise "restricted building work", which is work that affects the structure, weathertightness or the design of fire safety systems. Visit lbp.govt.nz to find out if your builder is licensed.

WEB RESOURCES

renovate.org.nz is part of the BRANZ website and offers stacks of information on renovating homes of different styles and eras, as well as know-how on contracts, planning and design.

energywise.govt.nz is a great place to gather ideas on everything from whether you could qualify for insulation funding to designing for the sun and dealing with damp, as well as finding out about the energy-efficiency of various appliances.

nkba.org.nz is the website of the National Kitchen and Bathroom Association and lists designers and kitchen and bathroom suppliers in different regions. ■



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DEEP SWEEPS

There was a time when abstract expressionist painting was completely out of fashion. So much of it had been done around the world that the style seemed exhausted. Grace Wright is one of a number of young New Zealand artists who are giving gestural painting a new lease of life. Anyone can splash paint around – the challenge is to make art, not a mess. Wright's sure sense of colour and confident command of her brushes result in paintings that are strong yet seductive, energetic yet balanced and

dramatic yet restrained. Everything seems fresh and immediate, not worked over. There is a real sense of depth, drawing you into a tangled wonderland of luscious, organic forms flowing sensually around each other. Both the exterior and interior of the human body are hinted at. Passionate bold colours, applied in dramatic sweeps, are held in tension by grey and sombre tones. These attributes give Wright's work great staying power, engaging the eye afresh at every viewing. *Warwick Brown*



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Architects' Houses: 20 Australian Homes

STEPHEN CRAFTI

Murdoch, NZ distributor Allen & Unwin, 272 pages, \$99.99, hardback

If you assume that a book covering 20 contemporary houses designed by leading Aussie architects for themselves is likely to be full of arcane experiments and unliveable flourishes, this well-produced book will have you thinking again. True it has its share of open-sky bathrooms, cantilevered black steel boxes, all-copper kitchens and rock-strewn living rooms. But you'd be surprised how reasonable – and attractive – they look when placed in



context. Stephen Crafti's beautifully photographed line-up (with a well-judged focus on both exterior and interior) is introduced by an informative text that dispenses with detached architectural jargon in favour of an easy conversational tone. The architects' aims, expectations, challenges and budgets all get attention,

along with liberal quotes. The houses, mainly in Sydney and Melbourne, range from streamlined urban pads to a lovingly crafted (if stylistically very different) extension to a 1929 Melbourne art deco oddity. A tiny-footprint five-level Sydney box that's both home and office rubs shoulders with the Corten steel sprawl of a vineyard eyrie in the Yarra Valley; a colour and art-filled glass shed precedes an austere black and white warehouse conversion. A pleasure to look at, and to read, this is the sort of book that will actually tell you, en passant, that the architect's wife would have liked a broom closet, but didn't get one. Better luck next time. *Jan Chilwell is NZ House & Garden's sub-editor*



Colour

ABIGAIL AHERN

Hardie Grant, \$49.99, 240 pages, hardback

British interior designer Abigail Ahern hopes her latest tome will have you reaching for the paintbrush. But forget pop art brights; Ahern wants you to embrace the inky, "bottom of the lake" shades of blue and green, which she discovered after becoming "bored" with the all white interiors of her London townhouse, painting her walls darker



and darker shades of grey until, finally, black. More recently, she's begun

experimenting with moody colours that hark back to the Victorian home of her childhood, where she remembers feeling "cocooned, protected and very much loved". Here, she shares her top tips and tricks for banishing beige from your home and embracing the dark side.

Andrea Warmington

Keep It Simple

ATLANTA BARTLETT & DAVE COOTE

Ryland Peters & Small, NZ distributor Bookreps, \$44.99, 176 pages, hardback



The ease with which UK stylist/designer couple Bartlett and Coote keep it simple is of course the product of long experience.

That long experience also produced their 2011 Ryland Peters & Small title *Pale & Interesting*, to which this current outing bears a striking resemblance, thriftily recycling the very same looks with the same pale-plus-pastels palette. Still, it's hard to argue with the approachable cheer of their nostalgic interiors. The advice on offer – declutter, recycle, ditch fashion – shows that their designing hearts are in all the right places and their show-and-tells (covering the basics, plus room by room rundowns) are full of photogenically bare floorboards, retro lighting, old school floral print cushions, battered leather, wall-hung taxidermy and vintage linen.

Jan Chilwell >

PICK OF THE BLOGS – Vintage Revivals

I discovered Vintage Revivals, vintagerevivals.com, only recently and proceeded to spend the next few hours trawling through its inspiring archives. Indeed, given my current addiction to restoring old furniture, it's a wonder I hadn't come across this thoroughly informative site earlier. It's filled to the brim with ideas and advice for making over furniture in need of a little – or a lot of – TLC, whether you're making over a small bedside table or reupholstering a couch.

Andrea Warmington

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If you liked Nicola and Norbert Koptisch's Roman-inspired garden (page 110), visit nzhouseandgarden.co.nz to see her fabulously gilded Wellington home.

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The Juice and Blend is Breville's best juicer and blender, sharing one interchangeable base. Use as either a blender or a juicer, or use both to make smoothies and cocktails from 100 per cent fresh juice. We have one Breville Juice & Blend to give away, RRP \$649.95. Find out more at breville.co.nz.



Win a supply of Efamol Pure Evening Primrose Oil, which has been helping women for more than 37 years. Just one or two softgels every day can help with premenstrual discomfort. We have 13 prizes to give away of one bottle of 75 softgels, valued at \$46.90 each. For stockists visit healthandherbs.co.nz.

The Chef Gets Healthy

TOBIE AND GEORGIA PUTTOCK

Lantern, \$48, 200 pages, softback



Rather a sweet story this: girl meets gorgeous chef in a Melbourne laneway restaurant and, after only a month of eating his delicious risotto, she's gone up a dress size. Ten years on, Georgia's still loving Tobie's cooking... and still struggling with her weight. With the help of a nutritionist, Tobie revolutionises the way they eat. He's willing to ditch the butter, cream and pasta but not the flavour (his CV includes stints with The River Cafe and Jamie Oliver). The resulting 100 recipes are simple, gluten-free, full of gutsy flavours (via herbs, spices, olives etc), packed with veges and protein. Breakfast offerings are notably delicious (baked eggs with capsicum and tomatoes, yum). Each recipe has a nutritional breakdown, but the tone is refreshingly light and non-preachy. *Rosemary Barraclough*

Honey & Jam

HANNAH QUEEN

Stewart, Tabori & Chang, \$49.99, 226 pages, hardback



Hannah Queen is a talented young American baker, photographer and food writer/blogger (honeyandjam.com) who lives in the

Appalachian mountains in Georgia. This is her first cookbook, an alluring collection of cakes and desserts based on the seasonal fruit, veges and herbs that grow in the fields and forests around her small town. Rustic and charming, it's a beautiful volume filled with delightfully different flavour combinations like Blood Orange-glazed Earl Grey Doughnuts, Minty Grapefruit Pavlova and Heirloom Tomato Cake. *Sally Butters is NZ H&G's food editor*

VISIT MELBOURNE FOR A FEAST OF ARTS AND EVENTS

Melbourne warms up this winter with a plethora of cultural events – from blockbuster exhibitions and musicals to festivals, performances and more



DAVID BOWIE:

16 July-1 November 2015

The Melbourne Winter Masterpieces series celebrates its 12th year with the eye-popping **David Bowie Is** exhibition at the Australian Centre for the Moving Image (ACMI). Direct from London's Victoria & Albert Museum, this ground-breaking multimedia experience brings together 50 years of fashion, music, film and video from one of the world's most iconic performers.

WWI CENTENARY EXHIBITION:

Until 4 October 2015

Coinciding with the ANZAC centenary, Melbourne Museum hosts a remarkable exhibition from the UK's Imperial War Museums. The exhibition tells the story of the Great War through film, rare artefacts, artworks and an immersive recreation of life in the trenches.



MASTERPIECES FROM THE HERMITAGE:

**The Legacy of Catherine the Great
Exhibition: 31 July-8 November 2015**

The National Gallery of Victoria (NGV) features more than 400 works from the personal collection of Russia's greatest female ruler – and renowned artistic visionary. See paintings by Rembrandt, Rubens, Titian and Van Dyck as well as exquisite examples of the decorative arts such as a 60-piece Sèvres dinner service.



THE LION KING:

Until 23 August 2015

Catch this Disney musical spectacular. Set against the majesty of the Serengeti Plains, this breathtaking production with unforgettable music from Sir Elton John is a must-see theatrical experience.



MELBOURNE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL:

30 July-16 August 2015

The 17-day Melbourne International Film Festival showcases the best contemporary cinema from Australia and the world, as well as retrospectives, tributes and discussion programmes. One of the oldest film festivals in the world, MIFF has become an iconic Melbourne event.

MELBOURNE WRITERS FESTIVAL:

20-30 August 2015

This annual event brings together writers from around the world to celebrate literature and inspire readers through a vibrant programme of storytelling, conversation and discussion, at a range of venues across the city.

MELBOURNE FRINGE FESTIVAL:

16 Sept-4 October 2015

The Melbourne Fringe Festival is Victoria's largest celebration of independent art, featuring local, national and international artists showcasing new works. Theatre, comedy, dance, visual arts, circus, music and so much more – this festival offers something for everyone.

30TH MELBOURNE FESTIVAL:

8-25 October 2015

This event is considered one of the major multi-arts festivals in the world. A feast of dance, theatre, music, visual arts and outdoor events, bringing together Australian and international performing artists.

shop window

THE LATEST IN SHOPPING NEWS FROM AROUND THE COUNTRY



DANSKE MOBLER: NEW LOUNGE COLLECTION

Inspiring new lounge designs are now in-store at Danske Mobler. The collection comprises both fabric and leather options with two things in common: ultra-modern style and super-affordability. Pictured is the groovy Nellie two-seater sofa in a striking fabric called Diego Curry.
www.danskemobler.co.nz



MASTERPIECES FROM THE HERMITAGE AT THE NGV

Masterpieces from the Hermitage: The Legacy of Catherine the Great is on at the National Gallery of Victoria from 31 July-8 November, featuring more than 400 works from the Russian Empress' personal collection. Only in Melbourne. www.ngv.vic.gov.au



AMERICAN FIESTA

Much-loved US dinnerware brand American Fiesta is now available in New Zealand. It's available in 10 complementary colours – choose one colour to dress up your dinner table or mix and match for a more casual table setting. American Fiesta is extremely durable, carrying a five-year chip warranty, so it can easily withstand the busiest of home kitchens. Fiesta is the most collected dinnerware in the world, with well over half a billion pieces produced. 0800 MY FIESTA (0800 69 3437), www.americanfiesta.co.nz



WALLACE COTTON

Take a sneak peek at early spring arrivals from Wallace Cotton. The new Chameleon duvet in organic cotton is beautiful on both sides, featuring a beige print on the front and soft blue on the reverse. Team with white sheets for a fresh spring look. Duvet sets from \$109.90. www.wallacecotton.com



MASTERCRAFT KITCHENS

The kitchen is the heart of your home so why settle for something that is not quite you? At Mastercraft Kitchens, we will work with you to understand your wants, needs and personality and then design a kitchen uniquely for you. Our affordable kitchens are fully installed and backed by a 10-year guarantee. Call 0800 67 67 67 or see us online at www.mastercraftkitchens.co.nz

JAMES DUNLOP: NOMAD COLLECTION

Seeking inspiration from various cultures around the world, the Nomad collection by Mokum is an eclectic blend of luxury textiles, reflecting our love of indigenous cultures and their extensive history of adornment. Woven by the finest mills from around the world, the Nomad collection invites you to take a global journey. View the collection at www.jamesdunloptextiles.com



WARWICK: MARISOL COLLECTION

The subtle Moroccan-inspired design of Warwick Fabrics' Marisol collection will add opulence to your home. Taking inspiration from the geometric zillij tiles popular in Moroccan architecture, the feature design is Marisol. Along with the smaller-scale design Clara, it co-ordinates beautifully with the boldly striped Carmella. All are woven with a chenille yarn, which offers comfort and luxury in its soft touch. www.warwick.co.nz

ZUCA: MESH TABLE LAMP

Zuca's industrial chic black metal table lamp has an architectural-style base and a black mesh shade. This urban table lamp will add a twist of industrial chic to any space and will look great in a warehouse-styled interior. Includes Edison bulb. www.zuca.co.nz



small stuff

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Waitoa Free Range Chicken is excited to add two delicious new gluten-free crumbed chicken products to their Green Box range. With no artificial colours, flavours or added preservatives, they come in two tasty flavours, Original and Lemon Pepper, and are an SPCA Blue Tick-approved healthier choice product. Perfect for creating wholesome, delicious meals in no time. www.waitoafreerange.co.nz

URBAN EYE

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CORNWALL PARK CAFE

Locals have been eagerly awaiting the opening of this cafe for almost a year. I visited the day it opened and was delighted to find it was every bit as good as I had hoped; good coffee, locally sourced ingredients on the menu, a plethora of cakes on the counter and, most importantly, plenty of seating (including outdoor beanbags, which are sure to be in high demand come summer time).



YOYO

Wellington-based YOYO, which specialises in New Zealand-made furniture, homewares and lighting, has arrived in Auckland. The expansive Ponsonby store features functional, affordable and beautiful furniture by well-known and emerging Kiwi designers, including Tim Webber, Duncan Sargent and Design Tree. Better yet, most of YOYO's furniture can be customised to suit your space.
24a Williamson Ave, Ponsonby, (09) 376 4884, yoyo.co.nz



NEST

Nest has just opened its second Auckland store in the up-and-coming Newmarket design centre, the Osborne Lane Precinct, and what a lovely store it is. Once home to a bakery, the beautiful, barn-like structure with exposed brick walls, pitched ceilings and even an open fireplace is now home to a lovingly curated selection of Nest's contemporary homewares. You'll find Egyptian cotton towels, washed linen bedding and pretty glassware from France, as well as the white porcelain dinnerware for which the brand is perhaps best known.
3 York St, Newmarket, (09) 520 6722, nest-direct.com

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Founded and run by herbalist Lynn Kirkland, the Herb Farm is the place to go for 100 per cent natural skincare and healthcare products, made on-site using active herbal extracts. Lynn formulates the products, which range from skin cream to exfoliant, and shampoo to baby oil. Visit The Herb Farm, shop in the store, eat lunch at the cafe, wander around the gardens and be pampered in the Beauty Retreat.
Grove Rd, Ashhurst, (06) 326 8633, herbfarm.co.nz

BRIDGE CAFE

Friday night means wood-fired pizza and live music at the Bridge Cafe in Ballance, at the Woodville end of the Manawatu Gorge. It's popular with the après walk crowd, is dog-friendly, the food is delicious and it's a great stop if you're heading across the island. You can also pop into The Store next door for woodcrafts, seedlings, gifts, preserves and artwork or head to the office out the back to organise a horse trek.
91 Gorge Rd, Ballance, (06) 376 8004, bridgecafe.co.nz



CROSS HILLS GARDENS AND NURSERY

Open for visitors from September to May, Cross Hills Gardens sports one of the world's finest collections of rhododendrons and azaleas (best colour in October and November). You can buy plants at the plant centre from June through November. For a bit of everything, plan to be at the Cross Hills Country Fair on 21 November.
339 Rangiwhia Rd, Kimbolton, (06) 328 5797, crosshills.co.nz

CHRISTCHURCH LEE SUCKLING

FROBISHER

Twenty-year-old interior design firm Frobisher has expanded its premises to offer an entire cultural experience. Venture in for contemporary home design services or furniture hire, get inspired at the in-house modern art gallery, then finish off your visit at the "espressoory" with a flat white and a ginger slice.

322 Manchester St, (03) 355 2628, frobisher.co.nz

THE ORGANIC FOOD HOUSE

Located in Rangiora, the Organic Food House deals directly with growers, makers and producers to offer a wide range of certified organic products. The store's preference is foodstuffs with limited food miles, so it sources the freshest vegetables from the region and uses them in the plant-based deli, and juice and smoothie bar. You can also bulk-buy everything from rice flour to coconut oil.

14 Queen St, Rangiora, (03) 313 0025, theorganicfoodhouse.co.nz



BEAUTY AT THE TANNERY

Catering for groups of up to 16, Beauty at the Tannery is an ideal place for an opulent group celebration or private party. From thermal mud treatments to full-body exfoliation in a hydro capsule, this day spa offers a welcome blend of high- and low-tech services. If you're a bride-to-be, the six-month pre-wedding preparation plan will ensure you look and feel your absolute best on your big day.

Unit 19, The Tannery, 3 Garlands Rd, (03) 381 0808, beautyatthetannery.co.nz

DUNEDIN CECILIE GEARY

VISUAL EFFECTS

Visual merchandiser and "event themery" specialist Trish Willocks has been dressing venues for conferences, weddings, balls, launches and other special occasions for years, as well as hiring out props for do-it-yourselfers. After getting frequent requests to purchase the props, she has opened a shop adjoining her events business. There she has assembled an eclectic collection of furniture and decorative homewares. Themes range from romantic to Hollywood-style bling.

477 Princes St, (03) 477 0325, visual-effects.co.nz



RELICS MUSIC STORE

David James and Irene Hundleby are passionate about keeping the physical (as opposed to digital) aspects of music alive. Half of their business is vinyl – more than 2000 LPs, new and second-hand. They offer a record-cleaning service and stock music-related artefacts, such as 1980s and 1990s gig posters for iconic "Dunedin sound" bands.

86 St Andrew St, (03) 474 9394, relicsmusic.co.nz

GUILD

This recently opened gallery/retail space showcases the work of 11 Dunedin fashion designers, jewellers, artists and other creative talents. Among them is bespoke perfumer Lesley Keen who, to the delight of local scent-aholics, is putting into practice the skills she acquired at perfume schools overseas. There's also a "floating gallery space" for guest exhibitions.

45 Moray Place, 021 455 685, guilddunedin.co.nz



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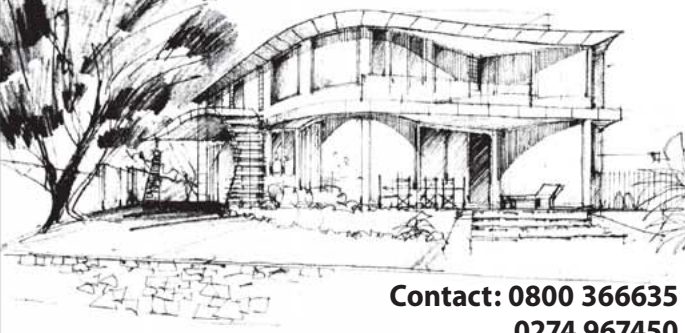
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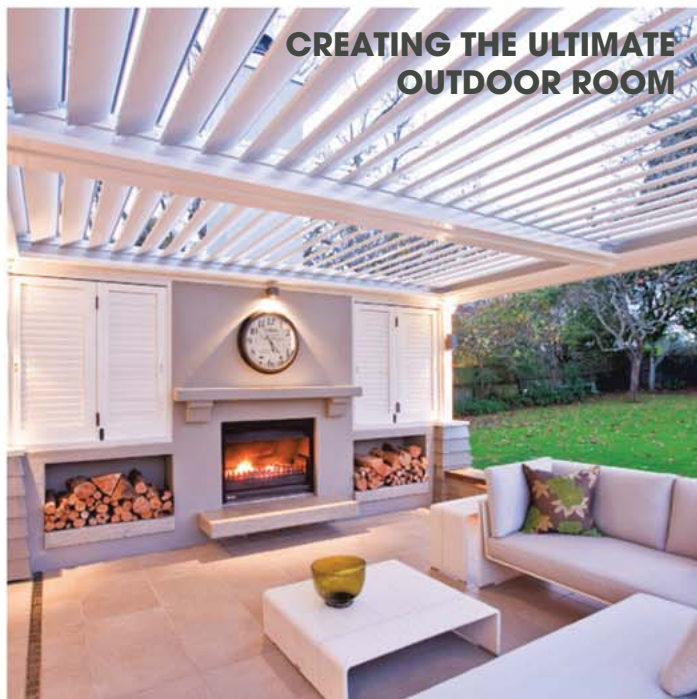


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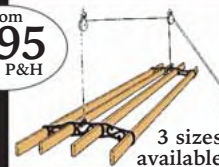
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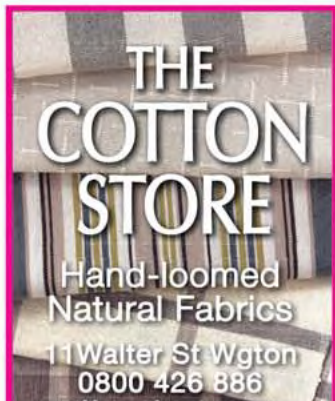
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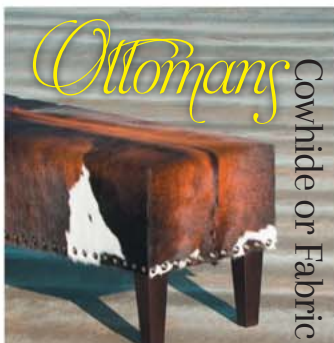


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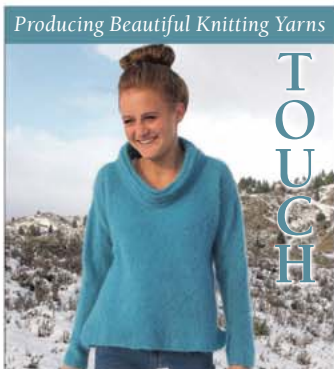
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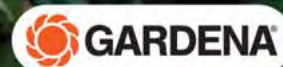
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2015 gardener of the year

ENTRIES NOW OPEN

NZ Gardener, in association with GARDENA, is searching for Kiwi gardening superheroes. We're looking for community leaders, inspirational mentors, the driving force behind a vege-growing food bank, it could be anything! If a gardener has inspired you, let us know

AMAZING PRIZES TO BE WON!

FIVE FINALISTS EACH GET:

- \$300 GARDENA gardening pack
- \$250 each of products from:
 - Aorangi Bulbs • Victa • Burnetts Horticulture
 - Kings Seeds • Mitre 10 • Skellerup Industries

THE 2015 GARDENA GARDENER OF THE YEAR ALSO RECEIVES

- GARDENA gardening pack worth \$600
- Resene paint worth \$1000

HOW TO NOMINATE

Tell us how your gardener superhero has inspired you. Include your name, phone number and the contact of the nominated gardener or contact person if it's a group.

SEND NOMINATIONS TO:

2015 GARDENA Gardener of the Year,
NZ Gardener, PO BOX 6341,
Wellesly St Auckland
You can also enter on our website:
nzgardener.co.nz

Terms and conditions:

1. Nominations close on August 30, 2015.
2. Acceptance of the prizes is deemed consent to use the winners' details and photographs for publicity purposes.
3. The judges' decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into.
4. The prizes cannot be transferred, exchanged or redeemed for cash.
5. This competition is open to New Zealand residents only.

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2015 GARDENER OF THE YEAR
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They literally swing from the rafters in the Lyttelton loft home featured in our next issue (pictured left and below). It's an issue filled with playful touches, including the pink party home of fashion maven Doris de Pont and the made-for-fun barn in rural Waipara (bottom left). Our food pages pick up the happy vibe with a line-up of colourful cakes, including a vertical layered red velvet cake (below).



SEPTEMBER ISSUE ON SALE 17 AUGUST

WAXING LYRICAL

A no-fuss candle cluster is all about
relaxed, contemporary charm

WORDS + STYLING TRACEY STRANGE WATTS
PHOTOGRAPH BELINDA MERRIE

Candleholders come in all shapes and sizes but, if you're looking for a modern (and very quick) alternative to add romance to a table, try this simple idea. Our contemporary "candelabra" involves nothing more than a pretty pot and a bunch of inexpensive table candles. No silver candlesticks to polish; no mass of votives to place (and light). Wooden mortar and pestle \$89.90, platter \$59.90, bowls from \$34.90 and small utensils \$12.90 each, dinner plates \$52.90 each, side plates \$39.90 each, coloured bowls (at right) \$39.90 each and salad servers \$29.90 per set, all by Nkuku through Source Home + Object, sourcehomeobject.com; pair of stacked plant pots \$15 each and orchid pot (containing candles) \$19, all from Nest, nest-direct.com; antique console table \$1438 from Leopold Hall, leopoldhall.com.



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